



## ***Canadian Teenagers Are Leading the Online Revolution? Maybe Not...***

**February 27, 2008, Vancouver, BC** – Findings from a new Ipsos Reid study – Inter@ctive Teens: The Impact of the Internet on Canada's Next Generation – are dispelling the myth of today's teen as an Internet-savvy, constantly-wired early adopter. Contrary to popular belief, teens are not online as much as they are stereotyped to be, the time they do spend on the Internet is focused rather narrowly on particular types of websites and activities, and their comfort level with technology is actually much lower than adults.

The time that is spent by teens online is actually rather limited, with 12 to 17 year olds spending, on average, only 13 hours per week on the Internet (compared to a weekly average of 19 hours for online adults), and that number has not increased since Ipsos last measured online teen behaviour in 2004. There are at least a couple of factors that might account for the relatively little time teens spend online. One is the influence of parents on teens' Internet use – over one-half (54%) of online teens surveyed reported that their parents place time limits or curfews on when they can access the Internet. The other is that only a minority of teens (37%) agree that using the Internet is an important part of their day (compared to 51% of adults).

According to Steve Mossop, president of Market Research for Ipsos Reid in Western Canada, "What is surprising about our research is the extent to which it challenges conventional assumptions adults make about the technological sophistication of teenagers. The reality is they spend far less time online than adults with a very limited number of activities like socializing, gaming and music, and their attitudes are surprisingly unsophisticated in terms of their lack of comfort with the technology, concerns about security and privacy, and importance of the internet in their daily lives."

The idea that teens are very technologically advanced in terms of their comfort level in using the Internet is not supported by research findings, which indicate that only slightly more than one-quarter (28%) of online teens consider themselves to be very skilled or expert. Another one-quarter (24%) admit to not being skilled in the use of the Internet, with the remaining teens identifying themselves as fairly skilled. While adults are going to a multitude of different websites for a variety of online activities, teens are focused mainly on websites that allow them to socialize, download music, or play games.

Online socializing is by far, the overwhelming reason why teens surf the net. The majority of teens surveyed (88%) have participated in an online social activity (compared to 70% of adults) and more than half (59%) visit online social networks or communities a few times a week to daily. Many teens report that the Internet is important to their social life (61%) and, among those who visit online social networks or communities, half (52%) say it is important to their day-to-day life. As a group, teens tend to be aware of online social networks or communities such as Windows Live Space, YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace. In addition to visiting online social websites frequently, teens tend to spend a significant proportion of their Internet time on these sites. For example, teens who are aware of the websites Windows Live Space and YouTube spend a weekly average of 7 hours and 5 hours, respectively, on these sites.

Also of importance to teens on a daily basis is participating in live, online chats and the majority of teens who participate in this online social activity do so on a weekly or daily basis. Teens are heavy users of instant messaging. Three-quarters of teens (74%) have used instant messaging to communicate with friends or family members, making applications such as Windows Live Messenger (formerly called MSN Messenger) indispensable to teens.

In addition to socializing online, teens are busy downloading music from the Internet and gaming. Nearly two-thirds of teens (64%) have downloaded digital music or MP3 files, and nearly one-third (30%) of online teens do this often, from a few times a week to daily (compared to 7% of adults). Teens are also avid online gamers, with over half of teens playing against people they know or complete strangers, and visiting gaming websites at least a few times a week or more.



*The [Ipsos Canadian Inter@ctive Reid Report](#) is the largest, most comprehensive and authoritative source of its kind about quarterly Internet trends in Canada. The results are based on two separate data collection instruments. In the first, 1,000 web users from Ipsos Reid's Canadian Internet Panel are surveyed online. Panelists are chosen through random telephone surveys conducted on an ongoing basis across Canada. Results are complemented by a further 1,000 interviews via telephone with Canadian adults in order to verify results of the panel, and track issues among non-Internet users.*

*For the purposes of this report, a total of more than 1,200 online interviews were completed among Canadian youth aged 12–17. Results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 2.8\%$ , 19 times out of 20, to what the results would be if the entire population of Canadian youth had been interviewed.*

**For more information on this news release, please contact:**

Steve Mossop  
President  
Market Research Canada West  
Ipsos Reid  
(778) 373-5001  
[Steve.Mossop@ipsos-reid.com](mailto:Steve.Mossop@ipsos-reid.com)

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