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**Social Networking and Teens**

In a small segment of a larger social networking use survey of preteens and teens and a small survey conducted with preteens in another location, we learned that almost 50% of the students 12 years old or under have a social networking profile. That percentage jumped to 86% of the 13 year olds polled. While the numbers are not statistically significant, given the small younger users’ sample size, it is something that demands further research.

47% of the 13 and under users spent 1 or more hours using their social networks. 31% of the students 12 and under had more than 100 “friends” on their profile while 63% of the thirteen year olds had 100 or more “friends.” 26% of the users thirteen and under accepted friend requests from someone they didn’t know in real life, and 15% sent friend requests to people they didn’t know in real life. 20% of the under -12 year olds and the thirteen year olds indicated that they had met face-to-face with people they had only known online. 50% of 12 and under and 66% of the thirteen year olds found their online friends from their existing friends’ profiles (“friends of friends”) and 19% of them randomly searched for profiles online to friend.

97% of the students polled age 14 and older said they had a social networking profile. Of these 3% said they only had a MySpace, 56% said they only had a Facebook and 39% said they had both. (48% of boys had just a Facebook profile and 41% had one of each.) Boys and girls spent the same amount of time on their social networks. 62% spent more than an hour on their social network. 31% of the students 14 and older had 400 or more friends on their profile and 69% had 200 or more friends on their profile.

71% of the students with 400 or more friends spent between 1 and 3 hours a day on their social network(s). 47% of those with 400 or more friends accepted friend requests from strangers, when compared with 20% to 33% of those with fewer online friends. (38% of all students polled said that they knew everyone on their friends list in real life. In this same age bracket, 32% accepted friend requests from strangers (25% of girls and 39% of boys).

Twice as many 14 and 15 year olds send friend requests to strangers as do the students 16 and older. 83% found these new “friends” from their existing friends. More than twice as many boys sent friend requests to strangers than girls (23% vs. 9%). Only 2% randomly searched profiles for friends. 40% found them in a common interest group. 13% of boys randomly searched profiles to find new friends, while only 5% of girls did.

12.5% of those with 400 or more users said that their online relationships had interfered with offline ones.

39% of the boys polled said they had met someone face-to-face that they had only known online, but 80% of them said they were friends of friends. 25% of girls reported meeting someone in real life that they had only known online. 83% of the boys who said they had met someone in real life did so within a few days or weeks of meeting, while girls took much longer (only 48% of them met someone within a few weeks. 24% of the girls met them after a few months and 29% met them only after more than a year.) Almost three times as many boys admitted to meeting 10 or more people in real life, compared to girls.

58% of girls had a Facebook only and 27% had both a MySpace and Facebook.