



For Immediate Release

Gay and Lesbian E-Commerce Activity Beats That of Non-Gay Web Users

***-Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive formalize unique research alliance-
-Will hone in on LGBT consumer attitudes and behaviors-***

Rochester, NY and Washington, D.C., February 19, 2001 - Witeck•Combs Communications and Harris Interactive (Nasdaq: HPOL), the global leader in Internet-based market research, signified their business objectives last month by agreeing to serve as each other's exclusive, preferred provider of services to the lesbian and gay market. The most recent study conducted jointly by the two firms reveals climbing online and e-commerce activity by Internet users who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).

The new study shows that over one-quarter (28%) of LGBT respondents conducted their banking transactions online in the last three months, as compared with 21% of non-gay web users. Similarly, a seven-percent gap exists between LGBT and non-gay respondents who took part in online auctions over the past three months (26% vs. 19% respectively), LGBT respondents are also slightly more likely to make online purchases for goods and services than their non-gay counterparts (63% vs. 59%). [Table 1]

Research last year by Harris Interactive and Witeck-Combs confirmed that gays and lesbians are "information-hungry" and disproportionately favor use of the Internet and online communication. In April 2000, one-quarter (25%) of LGBT respondents disclosed using the Internet more than 21 hours per week (excluding email) compared with 18% of non-gay Internet users. The latest survey, however, uncovered a remarkable jump – with 32% of LGBT Internet users now stating they use the Internet for more than 21 hours per week (apart from email), compared with a minor decline to 17% among non-gay users, also online more than 21 hours per week. [Table 2]

"We have long observed gay affinity for the web, and the numbers keep soaring," noted Wesley Combs, President of Witeck-Combs Communications. "The newest findings validate the power of the Internet to promote gay consumer spending and to transform the potential for e-commerce. The LGBT market appears to signal a bellwether – enabling gay households to find welcome, safety, convenience and service online."

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These e-commerce findings were part of a larger study about consumer behavior and risk-taking attitudes of gays and lesbians, as well as of other adults. The latest Witeck-Combs / Harris Interactive research was conducted online between January 11 and 15 among 2,525 adults using the Harris Interactive online panel of respondents, from which 137 people (6% of the total sample) identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. [Table 3]

According to David Krane, Senior Vice President of Harris Interactive, “These findings encourage us by tapping a meaningful cross-section of self-identified lesbians and gays online, and enabling us again to achieve a consistent 6% sample. This sample size mirrors our earlier online studies, and consistently exceeds other techniques, particularly telephone surveys. The confidentiality, convenience and relevance of online research for the LGBT community represent important new possibilities for all marketers.”

On more intimate questions about risk-taking behaviors related to cigarettes and seat belts, the samples illustrate added divergence between gay and non-gay respondents. Nearly 36% percent of LGBT respondents signify they smoke now, compared with 27% of non-gay participants. A full twenty-five percent (25%) of LGBT smokers say they have not even tried to give up the habit, while 23% of non-gay smokers confess they had not tried to surrender either. [Tables 4 and 5]

Ironically, LGBT smokers also reveal more direct knowledge about the harmful consequences of smoking. When asked if the LGBT smoker knew the risks of lung cancer, 98% (compared with 91% of non-gay smokers) replied affirmatively. When questions were asked about the possibility of heart disease (98% vs. 86%), and about “shortening their life,” (96% vs. 89%) – LGBT smokers recorded significantly higher self-awareness of the dangers. [Table 6]

Seat belt usage, however, showed a stark contrast about risks. For example, when questioned about their seat belt use when riding in the front seat of a car, 85% of the LGBT sample stated that they use them “all the time,” compared with 78% of the non-gay sample. [Table 7]

This fall, Harris Interactive and Witeck-Combs Communications also collaborated on a path-breaking study on LGBT voter behaviors and motivation on behalf of the Colorado-based Gill Foundation, and its OutVote 2000 nonpartisan voter education project.

Note: LGBT refers to individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding.

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TABLE 1

ONLINE ACTIVITIES IN LAST THREE MONTHS

“Which of the following have you done online in the last three months?”

Base: All respondents

	NON-GAY %	LGBT %
Purchased products or services	59	63
Checked bank account balances	33	39
Conducted banking transactions (e.g., transfers, payments)	21	28
Participated in an online auction (either bought or sold)	19	26
Bought or sold stocks or mutual funds	7	6

TABLE 2

TIME SPENT ONLINE

“Excluding e-mail, how many hours a week do you spend on the Internet or World Wide Web?”

Base: All respondents

	NON-GAY %	LGBT %
1-5 hours	28	16
6-10 hours	29	25
11-15 hours	12	12
16-20 hours	14	16
21 hours or more	17	32
Mean	14.1	19.3
Median	10	15

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TABLE 3

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

"What sexual orientation do you consider yourself?"

Base: All respondents

	Total %
Heterosexual	85
Lesbian	3
Gay	2
Bisexual	1
Transgender	*
Other	1
Not sure	1
Decline to answer	8

TABLE 4

SMOKING BEHAVIOR

"Do you smoke?"

Base: All respondents

	NON-GAY %	LGBT %
Smoke now	27	36
Don't smoke now	73	64

TABLE 5

WHETHER TRIED TO GIVE UP SMOKING OR TOBACCO HABIT

"Have you ever tried to give up smoking or chewing tobacco?"

Base: Smokers and tobacco chewers

	NON-GAY %	LGBT %
Yes, I have tried	77	75
No, I have not tried	23	25

TABLE 6

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RISKS OF SMOKING

“Do you believe that smoking...?”

Base: All respondents
 % Yes

	NON-GAY %	LGBT %
Increases your risk of getting lung cancer	91	98
Will probably shorten your life	89	96
Increases your risk of getting heart disease	86	98

TABLE 7

SEAT BELT USAGE

“How often do you wear a seat belt when you are in the front seat of a car?”

Base: All respondents

	NON-GAY %	LGBT %
All the time	78	84
Sometimes	19	11
Never	3	4

METHODOLOGY

This Harris Interactive survey was conducted via the Harris Poll Online within the United States between January 11 and 15, 2001. The survey was conducted via the Internet among 2,525 respondents, 18+ years of age. Figures for age, sex, race, education and number of adults in the household were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. “Propensity score” weighting was also used to adjust for respondents propensity to be online. This survey was conducted using QuickQuerySM, an omnibus service that provides approximately 2,000 respondents in two to four days.

In theory, one can expect that 95% of surveys with probability samples of this size would produce results that were within plus or minus 2 percentage points of what they would be if the entire adult population had been polled using the same methods. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (non-response), question wording and question order, interviewer bias, weighting by demographic control data and screening (e.g. for likely voters). It is difficult or impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. And this is not a probability sample. *These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.*

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About WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS:

WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS (www.witeckcombs.com) is the nation's premier strategic marketing communications firm specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over seven years experience in this unique niche market, WITECK • COMBS has developed respected relationships throughout the community and serves as a bridge between corporate America and gay and lesbian consumers. In 1999, the Gay Financial Network (gfn.com) identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of the nation's twenty-five most influential openly gay business executives.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive (Nasdaq: HPOL), the global leader in online market research, uses Internet-based and traditional methodologies to provide its clients with information about the views, experiences, behaviors and attitudes of people worldwide. Known for its Harris Poll, Harris Interactive has 45 years of experience in providing its clients with market research and polling services including custom, multi-client and service bureau research, as well as customer relationship management services. Through its U.S. and Global Network offices, Harris Interactive conducts research around the world, in multiple, localized languages. Harris Interactive uses its proprietary technology to survey its database of more than 7 million online panelists. For more information about Harris Interactive, please visit our website at <http://www.harrisinteractive.com>. EOE M/F/D/V

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Safe Harbor Statement

This media release includes statements that may constitute forward-looking information. We caution you that these forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those discussed. Additional detailed information concerning a number of factors that could cause actual results to differ is readily available in the "Risk Factors" section of our Prospectus, dated December 6, 1999 and filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to the Securities Act of 1933.