



Post-September 11 -- Gays and Lesbians Express Less Anxiety about Air Travel
Witeck-Combs/Harris InteractiveSM study also finds they plan to volunteer more

Rochester, NY, December 10, 2001 – Gays and lesbians plan to travel more often in the coming months as compared to heterosexuals. In addition, in the aftermath of September 11, by a substantial margin, gays and lesbians say they plan to volunteer more than their non-gay counterparts.

These are the results of a nationwide *Witeck-Combs Communications/Harris Interactive* study of 2,053 adults surveyed online between November 9 and 14, 2001, of whom 5% self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT). The survey was conducted by Harris Interactive (Nasdaq: HPOL), a worldwide market research and consulting firm, and Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a marketing and communications firm with special expertise in the GLBT market.

While both GLBT and heterosexual adults express some concern about the economy, GLBT adults are more likely than heterosexual adults to say they are somewhat or very pessimistic that the U.S. can avoid an economic downturn (54% GLBT vs. 39% heterosexual). Perhaps connected to this, GLBT adults say that in the next month they are less likely than heterosexual adults to spend money on gifts for the holidays, invest in the stock market, go out to places such as restaurants, movies, theater or sporting events or decorate their house or apartment.

Despite fluctuations in the economy and the aftermath of September 11th, the majority of GLBT and heterosexual adults say their behaviors have remained unchanged. Both GLBT and heterosexual adults say in the next three months that they will spend about the same time attending religious services. Gay and non-gay respondents also expressed similar, strong desires to socialize more with friends and family. Roughly one-third of each group stated they would socialize “more” or “much more” with their friends and family.

In addition, when comparing GLBT and heterosexual adults to each other, some interesting differences arise. For example, when asked whether they would fly more or less in the next three months, compared with last year, 20% of heterosexual respondents stated they would fly “much less,” and 11% would fly “less.” In contrast, only 13% of GLBT individuals predicted flying “much less,” while 12% said they would fly less. In describing their desires to volunteer, 18% of gay Americans stated they will “volunteer more,” while an additional 4% said they would do so “much more.” In comparison, 11% of heterosexual respondents noted they will “volunteer more” and 2% added “much more.”

“These findings are not surprising,” said Wesley Combs, president of Witeck-Combs Communications. “While September 11 touched every American in different ways, it seems to have amplified two ingrained behaviors of gays and lesbians – the propensity to travel remains strong, as well as the need to volunteer and connect with friends and family.”

“Gays and lesbians have long enjoyed the freedom of travel because it represents their ability to relax and recreate in places that welcome them free from discrimination. This need outweighs the fear that travel by air may offer,” added Combs.

“It does not surprise me at all that gays and lesbians plan to volunteer and connect with friends and family more in the coming months,” said Combs. “The gay and lesbian community has a long history of coming together to aid others, with the community’s response to the AIDS epidemic being a prime example. The bulk of today’s HIV/AIDS service organizations were created by members of the community when the government was slow to respond.”

“Harris Interactive and Witeck-Combs Communications have been regularly querying gay and lesbian consumers about relevant issues and how they impact this important market segment,” said David Krane, Senior Vice President at Harris Interactive. “By using online tools like the Harris Interactive Gay and Lesbian PulseSM, it is now possible to get near real-time information about the attitudes and preferences of gay consumers.”

Note: GLBT refers to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender respondents.

TABLE 1

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ECONOMY

“How optimistic or pessimistic are you that the U.S. can avoid a lengthy downturn market by more large-scale job layoffs, further weakness in the stock market, and a decline in Americans’ living standards?”

Base: All Respondents

	GLBT %	Heterosexual %
Very optimistic	5	11
Somewhat optimistic	41	51
Somewhat pessimistic	41	31
Very pessimistic	13	8

TABLE 2

SPENDING MORE OR LESS TIME ON ACTIVITIES

“In the next three months, how much more or less *time* do you expect to spend doing the following activities compared to the same time last year?”

Base: All Respondents

	Much More	More	About the same	Less	Much Less
Traveling by plane					
GLBT	1	9	65	12	13
Heterosexual	1	4	64	11	20
Socializing with friends and family					
GLBT	2	32	57	9	-
Heterosexual	7	28	61	3	1
Attending church, synagogue or places of worship					
GLBT	1	8	83	6	1
Heterosexual	3	11	79	2	4
Volunteering					
GLBT	4	18	69	4	5
Heterosexual	2	11	78	5	3

TABLE 3

SPENDING MORE OR LESS MONEY ON ACTIVITIES

“In the next three months, how much more or less money do you expect to spend on the following activities compared to the same time last year?”

Base: All Respondents

	Much More	More	About the same	Less	Much Less
Purchasing gifts for the holidays					
GLBT	-	8	58	23	10
Heterosexual	1	12	64	18	5
Investing in the stock market					
GLBT	1	4	62	18	15
Heterosexual	2	9	61	14	14
Going out to places such as restaurants, movies, theater or sporting events					
GLBT	*	13	59	16	12
Heterosexual	2	14	70	11	4
Decorating your house or apartment					
GLBT	*	10	60	19	11
Heterosexual	2	21	54	17	6

Methodology

This study was conducted online within the United States between November 9-14, 2001, among a nationwide cross section of 2,053 adults. Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income 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.

In theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. 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 online sample 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 Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive (Nasdaq: HPOL) is a worldwide market research and consulting firm, best known for *The Harris Poll*[®] and its pioneering use of the Internet to conduct scientifically accurate market research. Strengthened by its recent merger with Total Research Corporation, the Company now combines the power of technology with international expertise in predictive, custom, strategic research. Headquartered in the United States, with offices in the United Kingdom, Japan and a global network of local market and opinion research firms, the Company conducts international research with fluency in multiple languages. For more information about Harris Interactive, visit www.harrisinteractive.com. EOE M/F/D/V

About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

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

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