

**For Immediate Release**

## **New Witeck-Combs / Harris Interactive Internet Survey Confirms Gays and Lesbians are Among Heaviest Internet Users**

*Uncovers gay and lesbian attitudes, politics, and legislation  
surrounding issues such as same-sex civil unions*

**Rochester, NY and Washington, D.C., April 27, 2000** - A new Harris Poll conducted this month by Harris Interactive, in association with Witeck-Combs Communications, shows that one quarter of gays and lesbians online use the Internet and the World Wide Web more than 21 hours per week, excluding e-mail time. For non-gay respondents, the comparable percentage of Internet users was only 18%.

This unique finding was part of a significantly larger poll about the consumer behaviors and political attitudes of gays and lesbians, as well as of other adults. The latest Witeck-Combs / Harris Interactive research was conducted online among 7,558 adults from the Harris Interactive online panel of respondents, between April 4 and 10, in which 301 individuals (4%) identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

“These results confirm that gays, lesbians and bisexuals have a profound presence online,” said Wesley Combs, President of Witeck-Combs Communications. “This also validates the strong focus on the Internet by many companies as one of the most effective channels to the gay consumer market.” Combs noted this trend has particular value for the travel industry. “This research enabled us to test our evidence about gay and lesbian preferences in travel, and confirmed that 6% more gays and lesbians traveled somewhere in the last month – when compared with the non-gay sample.” (51% gay – 45% non-gay)

Combs also added new findings on gay households, revealing that *one out of five* gay or lesbian respondents stated that their household includes at least one child.

The findings suggest that gays and lesbians indeed are slightly more information hungry, with 87% reporting they “like having information available” from the multitude of online and offline advertising and news messages they receive daily (when compared with 80% of non-gay respondents). To underscore this trend, 11% more gays and lesbians read a non-sports related

magazine in the last month than compared with their non-gay counterparts (87% gay – 76% non-gay).

On current political topics, it is unsurprising that overwhelming majorities of gays and lesbians favor actions taken by Vermont elected officials to allow civil unions between gay and lesbian couples (by 91% to 4%). The survey also shows that among the 49% of the non-gay population who state they have friends or relatives who are gay or lesbian, a 54% to 33% majority also favors civil unions between same-sex couples. Among all adults, opinion is almost equally divided, with 43% opposing civil unions between gays and lesbians and 41% favoring them.

Poll respondents also were asked to express their opinions on voting, particularly in reference to choosing political candidates who favor same-sex civil unions. Thirty-six percent of all adults said that they would be less likely to vote for a candidate for their state legislature who supported civil unions between gays and lesbians. However, 41% of all adults said that it would either have no impact or they were not sure, and 23% of all adults said they would be more likely to vote for such a candidate. Gays and lesbians, themselves, say by 80% to 2% that they would be more likely to vote for candidates who favor same-sex civil unions.

**Other key findings in this Harris Interactive / Witeck-Combs data include:**

- The overwhelming majority of gays and lesbians (between 90% and 100%) believe that gay and lesbian couples should have the same rights as heterosexual married couples for each of the following:
  - Survivorship rights in case one partner dies before the other
  - Employee benefits for their partners
  - Access to adoption
  - Right to visit a partner in a hospital

Majorities of the entire adult population are in favor of three of these four rights:

Survivorship rights:	64% favor, while 26% oppose (10% not sure)
Employee benefits:	52% favor, while 38% oppose (10% not sure)
Hospital visits:	86% favor, while 10% oppose (4% not sure)

However a 48% to 38% plurality are opposed to adoption rights by gay and lesbian couples on the same basis as heterosexual married couples.

- At a time when Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore are running almost neck-and-neck for the presidency, gay and lesbian registered voters favor Gore by a massive 3-to-1 majority (75% to 24%) in a two-way race. Among all registered voters Bush (47%) and Gore (48%) are virtually equal.

Gore leads Bush by 51% to 43% among the 49% of registered voters who say they have friends or relatives who are gay or lesbian.

- These numbers do not change significantly if possible Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan is added to give voters a third choice. In this 3-way race, gay and lesbian likely voters give Gore a 74% to 20% lead over Bush, and people with gay and lesbian friends or family members go for Gore by 49% to 41%.
- Compared to the population as a whole, gays and lesbians are much less likely to be Republicans and more likely to be Independents. Only 18% of gays and lesbians think of themselves as Republicans compared to 30% of all adults. Thirty-eight percent of gays and lesbians consider themselves Democrats, compared to 34% of all adults. And 41% of gays and lesbians self-identify as Independents compared to 34% of all adults.

On April 10, Harris Interactive Inc. and WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS announced their partnership to develop in-depth marketing insight into the gay and lesbian consumer segment. The research will benefit the growing number of companies and organizations that are developing advertising and marketing strategies targeted at the long-overlooked GLBT market.

**About WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS:**

WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS ([www.witeckcombs.com](http://www.witeckcombs.com)) is the nation's premier strategic marketing communications firm specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over six 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 Inc., a leading global market research firm, 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 over 40 years 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 US and Global Network offices, Harris Interactive conducts research in over 85 different countries in more than 30 different languages. Harris Interactive uses its proprietary technology to survey its database of more than 6.2 million online panelists. For more information about Harris Interactive, please visit our Web site at <http://www.harrisinteractive.com>.

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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.

**TABLE 1**

**HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ONLINE, EXCLUDING E-MAIL**

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

Base: All Adults Online

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>	<b>Respondent is Not Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>None</b>	*	*	-	*
<b>1 to 5 hours</b>	26	26	21	26
<b>6 to 10 hours</b>	29	30	36	29
<b>11 to 15 hours</b>	12	12	9	12
<b>16 to 20 hours</b>	13	13	9	13
<b>21 to 30 hours</b>	11	11	14	10
<b>31 to 40 hours</b>	5	5	6	5
<b>40 hours or more</b>	4	3	5	3
<b>MEAN</b>	15	15	16	15

\*Less than 0.5%. Dash signifies value of zero.

**TABLE 2**

**WHETHER RESPONDENT TRAVELED IN LAST MONTH**

“In the last month have you traveled?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Gay %</b>	<b>Non-Gay %</b>
<b>Yes</b>	43	51	45
<b>No</b>	57	49	55

**TABLE 3**

**CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD**

“How many children under the age 18 live in this household?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>None</b>	1	2	1
<b>One</b>	17	21	16
<b>Two</b>	13	14	4
<b>Three</b>	5	5	2
<b>Four</b>	2	1	-
<b>Five or more</b>	1	1	*
<b>MEAN</b>	2	2	1

\*Less than 0.5%. Dash signifies value of zero.

**TABLE 4**

**ATTITUDE TOWARDS AMOUNT OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE**

“Some people say that there is too much information being generated these days, considering all the TV news shows, magazines, newspapers, and computer information services. Others say they like having so much information available. Do you feel overloaded with information or do you like having so much information available?”

Base: All Adults Online

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Gay %</b>	<b>Non-Gay %</b>
<b>Feel overloaded</b>	23	13	20
<b>Like having information available</b>	77	87	80

**TABLE 5**

**WHETHER RESPONDENT READ A NON-SPORTS MAGAZINE IN LAST MONTH**

“In the last month have you read a non-sports related magazine?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Gay %</b>	<b>Non-Gay %</b>
<b>Yes</b>	73	87	76
<b>No</b>	27	13	24

**TABLE 6**

**FAVOR/OPPOSE CIVIL UNIONS OF GAY AND LESBIAN COUPLES**

“Recently the Vermont House of Representatives passed a bill to create civil unions giving gay and lesbian couples most of the benefits of marriage while not calling the union a marriage. Do you favor or oppose this bill allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into a civil union?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>Favor</b>	41	54	91
<b>Oppose</b>	43	33	4
<b>Not sure</b>	16	14	6

**TABLE 7**

**FAVOR/OPPOSE YOUR STATE PASSING CIVIL UNION LAW**

“Would you favor or oppose your state legislature passing similar civil unions legislation?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>Favor</b>	40	53	88
<b>Oppose</b>	43	32	4
<b>Not sure</b>	17	15	9

**TABLE 8**

**MORE/LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE WHO SUPPORTS CIVIL UNION LEGISLATION**

“Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for your state legislature that supported similar legislation?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>More likely</b>	23	33	80
<b>Less likely</b>	36	26	2
<b>It would have no impact</b>	29	32	12
<b>Not sure</b>	12	9	6

**TABLE 9**

**ATTITUDES TO 4 GAY/LESBIAN COUPLES' RIGHTS**

“Do you believe that gay and lesbian couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples for each of the following...?”

Base: All Adults

		<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>Survivorship rights in case one partner dies before the other</b>	Yes	64	78	98
	No	26	15	1
	Not sure	10	6	1
<b>Employee benefits for their partner</b>	Yes	52	64	93
	No	38	27	5
	Not sure	10	9	1
<b>Access to adoption</b>	Yes	38	49	90
	No	48	36	3
	Not sure	14	15	7
<b>Right to visit a partner in the hospital</b>	Yes	86	92	100
	No	10	5	*
	Not sure	4	3	*

\* Less than one half percent

**TABLE 10**

**PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE: BUSH VERSUS GORE**

“If the presidential election were held today between George W. Bush for the Republicans and Al Gore for the Democrats, who would you most likely vote for?”

Base: Registered Voters

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/ Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>George W. Bush</b>	48	43	24
<b>Al Gore</b>	47	51	75
<b>None of these</b>	3	3	1
<b>Not sure</b>	2	3	-

Dash represents value of zero.

**TABLE 11**

**PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE: BUSH VERSUS GORE VERSUS BUCHANAN**

“If the presidential election were held today between George W. Bush for the Republicans, Al Gore for the Democrats and Pat Buchanan for the Reform Party, who would you most likely vote for?”

Base: Registered Voters

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/ Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>George W. Bush</b>	45	41	20
<b>Al Gore</b>	45	49	74
<b>Pat Buchanan</b>	4	4	1
<b>None of these</b>	3	3	1
<b>Not sure</b>	3	3	3

**TABLE 12**  
**PARTY IDENTIFICATION**

“Regardless of how you may vote, what do you usually consider yourself?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Have Gay or Lesbian Friends/ Relatives %</b>	<b>Respondent is Gay or Lesbian %</b>
<b>Republican</b>	30	28	18
<b>Democrat</b>	34	35	38
<b>Independent, no party affiliation</b>	34	35	41
<b>Other party</b>	2	2	3

### Methodology

This Harris Interactive Election 2000 study was conducted between April 4-10, 2000 with a national sample of 15,331 respondents from the Harris Interactive Inc. panel of Internet users. A subset of 7,558 respondents was asked questions about gay and lesbian issues, of which 301 individuals self-identified themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. The gay, lesbian, or bisexual self-identified respondents were a subset of respondents who stated that they have close personal friends or relatives who are gay or lesbian.

Data were weighted by age, sex, education, income, race/ethnicity, and region, as well as propensity to be online (a composite of several factors) in order to generalize the results to the national population.

In theory, with a randomly chosen sample of this size and after weighting the data, one could say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 2 percentage points of what they would be if the entire adult population of the United States had been polled. The sample used by Harris Interactive is not a random sample. While individuals have been randomly sampled from our database for this survey, they have previously chosen to take part in the Harris Interactive database.

There are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. These potential sources of error include question wording and question order, non-response, and screening (e.g. for likely voters). It is difficult or impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors so the words "margin of error" should be avoided when reporting all survey data.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.