

National Survey Reveals Media Consumption Preferences of Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals

New data by Witeck-Combs Communications/Harris Interactive identify specific news, information and entertainment channels important to marketers who strive to reach gay—and gay-friendly—audiences

Rochester, NY—July 21, 2003 – According to the most recent online consumer research study by Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive®, gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) consumers tend to read and view many of the same forms of media as their heterosexual counterparts. However, across the board, they favor lifestyle, home decorating and design magazines, news magazines, and premium cable networks more than their non-gay counterparts.

Sixty percent (60%) of GLB individuals frequently or occasionally read mainstream news magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, while the same is true of 45% of heterosexuals surveyed. In addition, 41% of GLB consumers say they read lifestyle, home decorating and design magazines, such as *Martha Stewart Living* or *Architectural Digest*, frequently or occasionally when compared with 30% of non-gay respondents. More GLB consumers also report watching premium cable networks like HBO, Showtime, and Cinemax frequently or occasionally than do heterosexuals (52% to 45%).

These are a few highlights of a nationwide survey of 2,394 adults, of whom approximately five percent (5%) self-identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. The survey was conducted online between June 16 and 22, 2003 by Harris Interactive, a worldwide market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the GLB market.

When asked about readership patterns for national gay magazines, such as *The Advocate*, *Out*, and *Curve*, one-third (34%) of GLB respondents say they read these publications frequently or occasionally. However, when asked about news sources that allow for great anonymity such as online channels like Gay.com and Planetout.com, over four in ten (41%) GLB individuals surveyed frequently or occasionally visit gay online channels. One in five (19%) GLB respondents also report they frequently or occasionally read their local gay newspaper.

“These data support our earlier research that revealed gay and lesbian consumers are media-hungrier than ever and seek information and entertainment from both mainstream and gay channels,” said John Butler, senior strategist at Witeck-Combs Communications. “Corporate marketers should consider the options as they develop strategies to reach their gay and lesbian customers. The companies that succeed in capturing their share of the GLB market’s estimated \$450 billion in buying power will do so by placing inclusive ads with tailored messages in places where GLB consumers find information.”

“The increased inclusion of openly gay and lesbian characters and programming on premium cable as well as network programming means GLB people are tuning in more than ever. Programs like Showtime’s ‘Queer as Folk’ and NBC’s ‘Will and Grace’ also attract a large crossover audience, persuading more companies to tailor advertising messages to gay and gay-friendly audiences – a technique shown to increase brand loyalty,” added Butler. “Opportunities for product placements also should not be overlooked. This is a simple, yet effective way to connect with a diverse audience including both gay and non-gay consumers. Bravo’s new show ‘Queer Eye for the Straight Guy’ featured products from GMC and Wilsons Leather, for instance.”

“With nearly 20% of gay and lesbian consumers reading community-based gay and lesbian regional newspapers regularly, these publications should not be overlooked as a resource for media planners,” said Butler. “They offer marketers a cost-effective solution to guiding these sought after consumers directly to a product or service.”

Notes on reading tables

GLB refers to gay, lesbian and bisexual respondents. The percentage of respondents has been included for each item. An asterisk (*) signifies a value of less than one-half percent. A dash represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents answering that question.

**TABLE 1
GENERAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION**

“Now, we have a question related to the media you currently read or watch. How often do you read or watch each of the following?”

Base: All Adults

	Frequently/ Occasionally (net)	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom/ Never (net)	Seldom	Never
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Local television networks						
GLB	90	64	26	10	7	3
Heterosexual	87	62	25	13	10	3
Local newspapers						
GLB	87	54	34	13	10	2
Heterosexual	82	56	26	18	13	5
Independent and alternative newspapers						
GLB	37	14	23	63	16	47
Heterosexual	30	9	21	70	31	39
Broadcast television networks (e.g., ABC, CBS)						
GLB	89	70	19	11	5	6
Heterosexual	90	66	24	10	7	3
National newspapers (e.g., USA Today, The Wall Street Journal)						
GLB	32	11	21	68	27	41
Heterosexual	36	10	25	64	33	31
Mainstream magazines (e.g., Time, Newsweek)						
GLB	60	16	44	40	29	12
Heterosexual	45	13	32	55	33	21
Mainstream online channels (e.g., AOL, MSN, Yahoo!)						
GLB	57	35	22	43	15	28
Heterosexual	60	36	24	40	21	20
Basic cable networks (e.g., ESPN, CNN, MTV)						
GLB	80	52	28	20	9	11
Heterosexual	79	50	28	21	11	10
Specialty cable network (e.g., Discovery, Lifetime, HGTV)						
GLB	78	56	22	22	13	9
Heterosexual	81	52	29	19	10	9
Premium cable networks (e.g., HBO, Showtime, Cinemax)						
GLB	52	33	19	48	17	30
Heterosexual	45	27	18	55	18	37
Mainstream radio						
GLB	67	43	24	33	23	11
Heterosexual	72	41	31	28	16	12
Independent and alternative radio						
GLB	29	8	21	71	21	50
Heterosexual	33	11	22	67	27	40
Talk radio						
GLB	50	23	28	50	21	29
Heterosexual	47	21	26	53	26	27
Lifestyle, home decorating and design magazines (e.g., Martha Stewart Living, Architectural Digest)						
GLB	41	22	19	59	19	40
Heterosexual	30	10	20	70	27	43

TABLE 2
GAY AND LESBIAN MEDIA CONSUMPTION
 “In the past 6 months, how often have you...?”

Base: All GLB Adults

	Frequently/ Occasionally (net)	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom/ Never (net)	Seldom	Never
	%	%	%	%	%	%
National GLBT magazines (e.g., <i>The Advocate, Out, Curve</i>)						
GLB	34	18	16	66	22	44
Heterosexual	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community-based GLBT online channels (e.g., Gay.com, PlanetOut.com)						
GLB	41	17	24	59	21	38
Heterosexual	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community-based GLBT newspapers (e.g., <i>Washington Blade, Bay Windows, Bay Area Reporter</i>)						
GLB	19	10	10	81	24	57
Heterosexual	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community-based GLBT radio						
GLB	10	3	7	90	12	78
Heterosexual						

Methodology

This study was conducted online within the United States from June 16-22, 2003, among a nationwide cross section of 2,394 adults. Of those adults surveyed, 120, or approximately five percent, self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual (GLB). 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 two percentage points (for the overall sample) and plus or minus ten percentage points (for the GLB sample) 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 impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. This online survey 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, Inc.

Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. (www.witeckcombs.com) is the nation's premier strategic marketing communications firm, specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over nine 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. In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25 experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trendspotting for their pathbreaking work on the gay and lesbian market.

About Harris Interactive®

Harris Interactive (www.harrisinteractive.com) is a worldwide market research and consulting firm best known for **The Harris Poll**®, and for pioneering the Internet method to conduct scientifically accurate market research. Headquartered in Rochester, New York, U.S.A., Harris Interactive combines proprietary methodologies and technology with expertise in predictive, custom and strategic research. The Company conducts international research through wholly owned subsidiaries—London-based **HI Europe** (www.hieurope.com) and Tokyo-based Harris Interactive Japan—as well as through the Harris Interactive Global Network of local market- and opinion-research firms, and various U.S. offices. **EOE M/F/D/V**

To become a member of the Harris Poll OnlineSM and be invited to participate in future online surveys, visit www.harrispollonline.com.

Press Contacts:

Nancy Wong

Harris Interactive

585-214-7316

nwong@harrisinteractive.com

John Butler

Witeck-Combs Communications

202-887-0500 ext. 12

jbutler@witeckcombs.com