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Gay and Lesbian Adults More Likely to Read Blogs and Use Social Networking Tools

New online study also shows gay and lesbian adults are more likely to be members of Facebook and MySpace

Rochester, N.Y. and Washington, D.C. – June 9, 2009 – According to a recent national survey conducted by Harris Interactive®, a small majority of gay and lesbian adults online today are reading blogs (a familiar, and abbreviated term for online commentary known as a weblog). More than half (55%) of gay and lesbian respondents reported reading some type of blog, compared with only 38% of heterosexuals. This represents a small increase from March 2008 when 51% of gay and lesbian respondents reported reading some type of blog. A similar question was asked in November 2006 and only 32% of gay and lesbian adults then reported reading blogs.

When it comes to the types of blogs popular with Americans, the survey also found 34% of gay and lesbian adults online reported reading news and current issue blogs, compared with 22% of heterosexual adults. A quarter (25%) of gay and lesbian adults also read entertainment and pop culture blogs, compared with 15% of heterosexuals. Considering the global and media attention focused on our new President, 28% of gay and lesbian adults also read political blogs, compared with 23% of GLBT adults doing so in March 2008. In comparison, only 14% of heterosexual adults reported reading political blogs in May 2009. Confirming their strong appeal for travel news and opportunities, 14% of gay and lesbian respondents reported reading travel blogs compared with 8% of heterosexual respondents.

The new nationwide survey of 3,000 U.S. adults, (ages 18 and over), of whom 404, self identified as gay or lesbian (which includes an oversample of lesbian and gay adults), was conducted online between May 11 and 18, 2009, by Harris Interactive, a global 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 GLBT market.

Apart from getting information online from reading blogs, gay and lesbian adults also are choosing to connect online through social networking sites more often than their heterosexual counterparts. Slightly more than half (55%) of gay and lesbian adults state they are members of Facebook, compared with 46% of heterosexual adults. Also, 43% of gay and lesbian respondents report being members of MySpace, compared to just less than a third (30%) of heterosexual respondents. When it comes to the business-oriented social networking site, LinkedIn, 23% of gay and lesbian respondents reported being members, while 13% of heterosexual adults stated they are members.

“In several years capturing trends, we see again that gays and lesbians are not only looking to stay well informed but also to expand their key social, professional and personal connections online”, said Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications. “As companies work to make the most of their advertising budgets in the current economic climate, blogs and social networking sites are an even more powerful cross-section of opportunities today when reaching out to this market.”

Oprah Winfrey made the news when she recently made her first “tweet” using Twitter, a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question - *what are you doing now?* One out of five (20%) gay and lesbian adults reported being a member of Twitter, compared with 12% of heterosexual adults.

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TABLE 1
BLOG READERSHIP
“What types of blogs do you read?”

Base: All adults

	Nov. 2006		March 2008		May 2009	
	Gays and Lesbians	Hetero-sexuals	Gays and Lesbians	Hetero-sexuals	Gays and Lesbians	Hetero-sexuals
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Read Blogs (NET)	32	26	51	36	55	38
News/current issues blogs	12/9*	9/7	28	19	34	22
Personal blogs	17	12	31	15	32	17
Political blogs	12	8	23	14	28	14
Sports blogs	2	5	6	13	NA	NA
Entertainment/pop culture blogs	8/4*	6/3	26	11	25	15
Music blogs	5	4	14	6	11	7
Travel blogs	n/a	n/a	11	6	14	8
Gay and Lesbian blogs	19	-	30	-	30	-
I do not read any blogs	68	74	49	64	45	62

N/A indicates not asked; “-“ indicates no response

* Please note, in 2006, news and current issues were asked separately as were entertainment and pop culture

**TABLE 2
FREQUENCY OF VISITING BLOGS**

“On average, how often do you visit the bogs you read?”

Base: Read (specific) Blogs

	Total	At Least Once a Week (NET)	At Least Once a Month (NET)	Less than Once a Month
	%	%	%	%
Personal blogs				
Gays and Lesbians	32	53	33	13
Heterosexuals	17	52	34	14
News/Current Issues blogs				
Gays and Lesbians	34	72	17	11
Heterosexuals	22	59	31	9
Political blogs				
Gays and Lesbians	28	67	29	4
Heterosexuals	14	57	32	11
Entertainment/pop culture blogs				
Gays and Lesbians	25	55	34	11
Heterosexuals	15	57	30	14
Gay and Lesbian blogs				
Gays and Lesbians	30	58	29	12

Note: Data for *Music blogs*, *Travel bogs* are not included as sample size of those who read these blogs is too small

**TABLE 3
MEMBER OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

“Are you a member of the following social networking sites?”
Percent who say “yes, they are a member”

Base: All adults

	Total	Gays and Lesbians Total	Gays	Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%	%	%
Facebook	47	55	50	65	46
MySpace	32	43	44	41	30
Linked in	13	23	23	23	13
Plaxo	6	9	11	4	6

**TABLE 4
BEING MEMBER OF TWITTER**

Twitter is a service for friend, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question – what are you doing. Are you a member of Twitter?

Base: All Adults

	Total	Gays and Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%
Yes	13	20	12
No	87	80	88

TABLE 5
FREQUENCY OF VISITING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
 “Overall, in a typical month, how often do you visit these social networking sites?”
Percent who say “at least daily”

Base: All adults

	Total	Gays and Lesbians Total	Gays	Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%	%	%
At least weekly (Net)	65	65	66	60	66
At least monthly (Net)	21	21	20	22	21
Less than once a monthly	14	15	14	17	14

TABLE 6
FEELINGS TOWARD ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
 “How do you feel towards advertisements found on social networking sites?”

Base: All adults

	Gays and Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%
Positive (Net)	6	12
Neither Positive nor negative	63	57
Negative (Net)	31	31

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted the study online within the United States between May 11 and 18, 2009, among 3,000 adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 2,451 indicated they are heterosexual and 404 self-identified as gay or lesbian (this includes an over-sample of lesbian or gay 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. In addition, the results for the gay and lesbian sample were weighted separately based on profiles of the gay and lesbian population that Harris Interactive has compiled through many different online surveys. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Harris Interactive

[Harris Interactive](http://www.harrisinteractive.com) is a global leader in custom market research. With a long and rich history in multimodal research, powered by our science and technology, we assist clients in achieving business results. Harris Interactive serves clients globally through our North American, European and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms. For more information please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. is the nation's premier marketing communications and consulting firm, specializing in developing and implementing effective strategies reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over 15 years experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications not only serves as a bridge between corporate America and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender consumers (GLBT), but also provides counsel to countless non-profit organizations that aim to educate the public on gay and lesbian issues or to better reach their GLBT membership.

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 path breaking work on the gay and lesbian market, and in 2006 Bob Witeck and Wes Combs co-authored **Business Inside Out: Capturing Millions of Brand Loyal Gay Consumers** (Kaplan Publishing), considered the first-ever book on marketing insights, practical tips and strategies targeting the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender market. They have appeared in worldwide media outlets including Fortune, CNBC, CNN, Reuters, Associated Press, Ad Age, New York Times and Washington Post. For more information visit www.witeckcombs.com.

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