

Teen Online Safety & Digital Reputation Survey

Cox Communications Teen Online Safety &
Digital Reputation Survey in Partnership with
the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC)
(Fielded among teens ages 13-17)

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your friend in the digital age®



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Advancing Cox's commitment to online safety

- As part of its continuing commitment to youth, and in partnership with The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), Cox Communications sought to better understand teen online behavior and attitudes with a specific focus on digital reputations.
- Cox Communications and TRU have partnered together in previous waves of research to understand teens' online behavior.
- In an effort to update this research with 2010 data, as well as explore new territory around digital reputations, TRU was commissioned to conduct quantitative research among teens which would...
 - Provide a fresh, up-to-date perspective on these behaviors and attitudes
 - Uncover "press-worthy" insights that might draw attention to these issues



Exploring new territory around digital reputations

- Measure teens' tendency to exhibit potentially risky behavior online, observing the trend that has taken place in the past 5 years.
- Gauge perceptions about the safety or potential risk associated with various online activities, such as posting photos, videos, or other personal content.
- Determine teens' actual vs. perceived vulnerability based on specific online behaviors and associated attitudes.
- Understand what type of image teens are portraying online, and how this differs, if at all, from the image portrayed in real-life.
- Understand beliefs and perceptions on if/how their current online behavior can affect various aspects of their future.



Online survey among 13- to 17-year-olds

- TRU conducted a total of 1,032 online interviews teens ages 13 to 17.
 - Interviews were distributed evenly by age and gender.
 - African-American and Hispanic males each comprised ~12% of the sample.
 - Surveys were nationally dispersed consistent with U.S. Census figures to ensure a representative geographic mix.
 - Each interview was approximately 15 minutes in length.

1,032 Online Interviews			
	Males	Females	Total
13- to 15-year-olds	296	315	611
16- to 17-year-olds	202	219	421
Total	498	534	1,032

How to read the comparison data

- Significance testing has been conducted for all data comparisons.
 - A capital letter indicates a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.
 - A lower case letter indicates a significant difference at the 90% confidence level.
 - The absence of a letter indicates no significant difference.

Example:

2007 (A) **2010 (B)**

56	76 A
50	54 a
53	52

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While expressing confidence in their own online safety, teens continue to take risks and remain vulnerable

1	Teens are seemingly aware of the risks of online behaviors: Most acknowledge that certain online behaviors can impact multiple facets of life.
2	Further, they claim they carefully manage the image they project online: Most would be very upset if their reputation were damaged by online posts.
3	Yet, they fail to take basic precautionary steps to protect themselves online: Much of what they post online is hasty and accessible to strangers.
4	Despite strong concern about the consequences, teens continue to post personal info online: This trend has increased over the past few years.
5	Teens claim their online profiles reflect an accurate, positive image of themselves: Teens say, “It’s them, not me,” who try to appear cooler online.
6	Teens recognize negative online behaviors accompany society’s reliance on social media: And, most expect little improvement over the next 5 years.

Implementing safe online practices among teens and involving parents



Teens must be jolted out of their false sense of security: Filled with the excitement that surrounds new technology and sure of their own digital savviness, teens feel immune to the dangers and consequences that may attend some online behaviors. They frequently overestimate their own capacity to deal with online risk, believing they are more careful than their peers – they are living with a false sense of security.



Teens lack credible guidance: TRU believes teens' online risk-taking is, in some ways, even more insidious than risk-taking in other aspects of their lives. In areas typically associated with teen risk – driving, drinking, drugs, sex – teens can rely on parents to provide guidance. With technology, teens are often ahead of their parents, making parenting difficult and reinforcing teens' vulnerability.



Parents must be challenged to step up to the plate: Parents must take initiative to get familiar with the complexities of teens' online universe. They must seek out tools that can empower them to provide guidance to their teens. Simple conversations between parents and their teens can be productive first steps in helping parents become aware of their teen's online behaviors and helping teens realize and address their online vulnerability.

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Teens use technology that *works for them* – cellphones, social networking, and gaming have taken huge jumps

2006 (A)	2010 (B)	% of teens who have...
95	93	Personal email address
63	84 A	Cell phone
61	84 A	Social networking profile
84 B	63	IM screen name
33	45 A	Game system
37 B	19	Blog



Teens know online posts can impact many aspects of life

% of teens who believe each can be affected by online posts

82

Their reputation

80

Their safety

72

Their friendships

60

Their future, in general

59

Their dating relationships

59

Their ability to get a job in the future

55

Their chances of getting accepted into the college of their choice



Most say they carefully manage their online reputation



2

in

3

(68%) agree *“I care a lot about the image I portray of myself online”*

Nearly as many **(64%)** say the same of *most people their age*

2

in

3

(67%) agree *“I carefully manage the image I portray of myself online”*

Only **34%** say the same of *most people their age*

And, most would be upset if their reputation were damaged



73%

**would be very
upset if their
reputation was
damaged by
content
posted online**

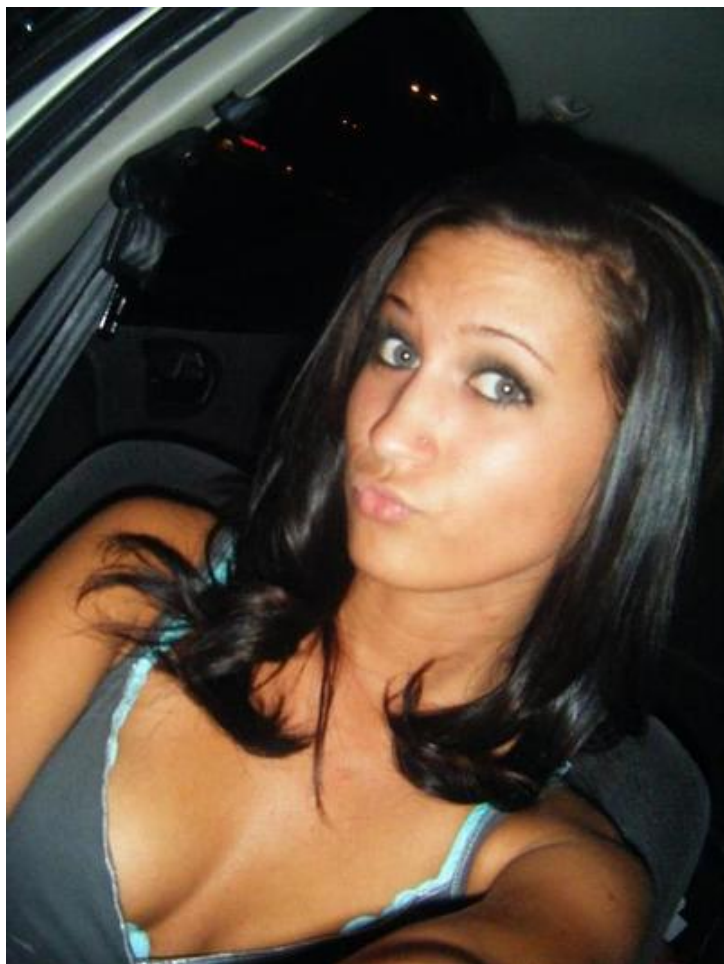
Losing the respect of their family is what they fear most

Rank order of consequences of risky online posts teens fear most:



1	Losing the respect of family
2	Getting in trouble with parents
3	Losing the respect of friends
4	Jeopardizing their physical safety
5	Jeopardizing college opportunities
6	Jeopardizing future job opportunities
7	Getting in trouble with teachers
8	Jeopardizing dating opportunities

Yet many don't think before posting photos of themselves...



*% of teens who **NEVER** do the following before posting photos of themselves online:*

62

Check with a parent

43

Ask a friend's opinion

35

Consider the long-term consequences

29

Consider what authority figures will think about them

23

Consider what their peers will think about them

...or before posting a comment or status update



*% of teens who **NEVER** do the following before posting a comment or status update online:*

67

Check with a parent

33

Consider what authority figures will think about them

56

Ask a friend's opinion

24

Consider what their peers will think about them

41

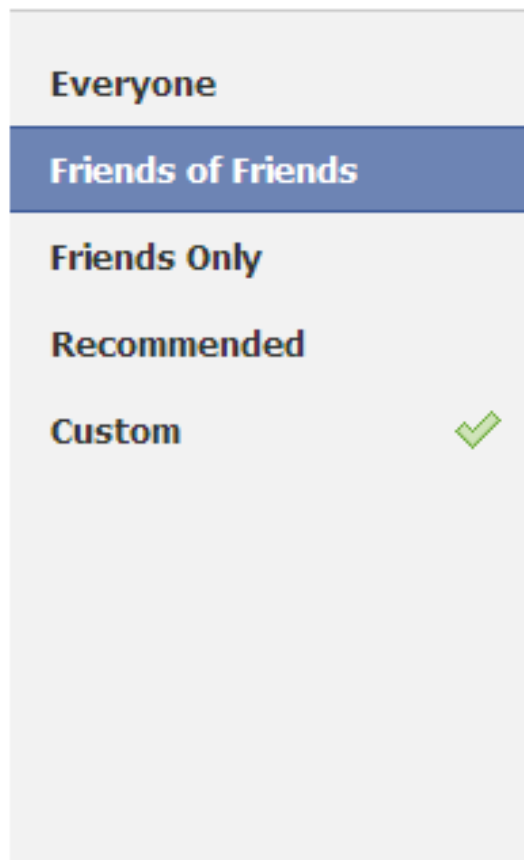
Consider the long-term consequences

18

Proofread it

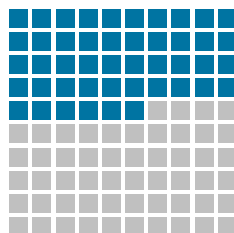
Many unknowingly place themselves at risk by allowing unrestricted access to their online profiles

Sharing on Facebook



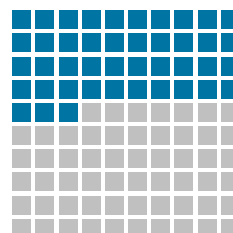
A screenshot of the Facebook sharing settings menu. The menu is a vertical list of options: 'Everyone', 'Friends of Friends', 'Friends Only', 'Recommended', and 'Custom'. 'Friends of Friends' is highlighted with a blue background. A green checkmark is next to the 'Custom' option.

46%



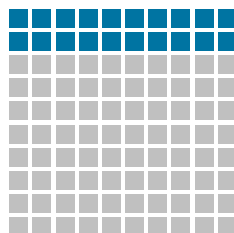
Have profile info (*comments, posts, status updates, etc.*) viewable by strangers

43%



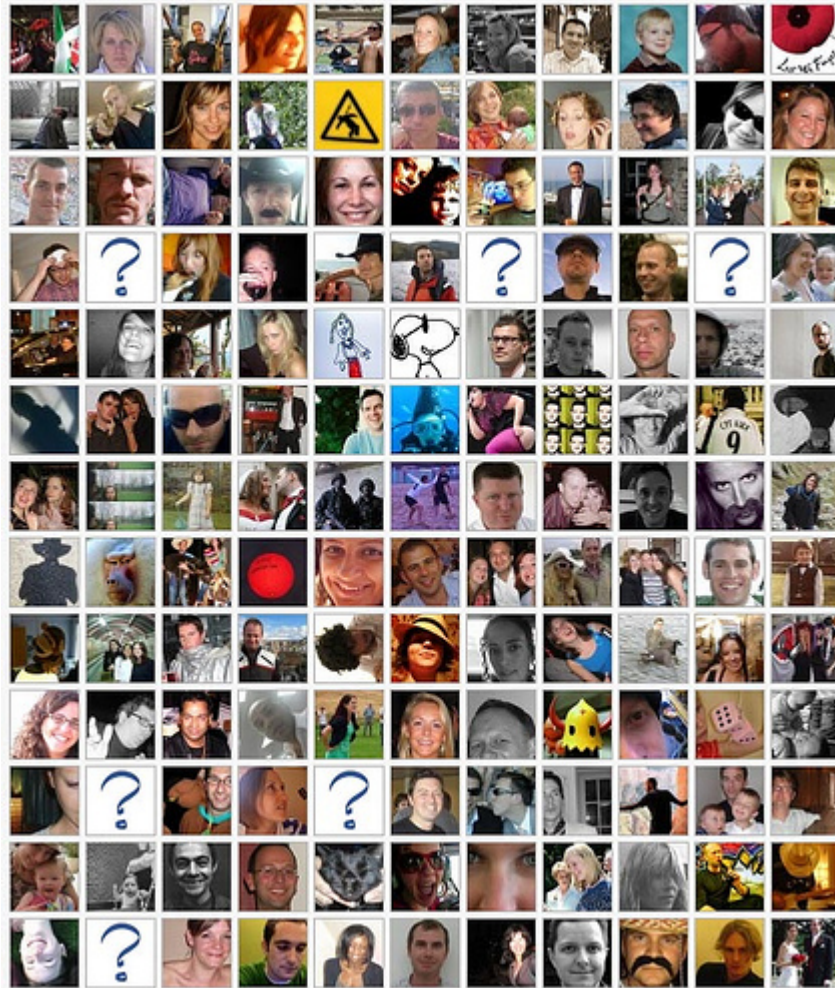
Have photos, videos, and blogs viewable by strangers

20%



Have contact info (*phone, address, email, etc.*) viewable by strangers

And many are even social network friends with *strangers*



% of teens who are social network friends with...

92%

Someone they don't know well, if at all

89% An acquaintance

55% Someone they've never communicated with in person

38% Someone they've never communicated with at all

Yet, teens fail to recognize their own vulnerability



Nearly half
(47%)

believe they have complete control over what happens with photos, videos, and other content they post online

Teens recognize danger linked with certain online behavior



Only...

1

in

3

Considers it safe to have *personal info* on a blog or social network site (33%)

However...

This is up from **20%**
just 3 years ago (2007)

And many express concern about the consequences

62%

Express concern that their *reputation could be damaged* based on info, photos, or videos posted online



% of teens who express concern that online posts will lead to...

70	Personal info unknowingly ending up online	57	Missed job opportunities
69	Someone using personal info undesirably	57	Getting in trouble with parents/teachers
68	Their photos unknowingly ending up online	54	Not getting accepted into choice college
63	A negative effect on their future	51	Friends/family losing respect for them
59	Someone causing them physical harm	46	Missed dating opportunities

Despite concern about posting contact info online, most do it anyway



88%

Worry about the consequences of posting their *contact info* online

80%

Do it anyway

2007 (A) 2010 (B) % of teens who have posted...

59

71 A

The city they live in

49

63 A

The name of their school

8

29 A

Their cell phone number

9

Their physical location

Risky postings are also worrisome, but some still do it

87%

Worry about the
consequences of making
risky posts online

1 in 5

Do it anyway (20%)

% of teens who have posted...

13

Sexual comments/posts

9

Photos, videos, or posts with
cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs

6

Photos, videos, or posts with
physical fighting

3

Revealing, sexual, or naked photos
or videos of themselves



42%

Have posted *curse words* online

Even seemingly innocent posts raise concerns among teens; yet the majority disregard these concerns

7 in 10

**Worry about
them (71%)**

9 in 10

**Post them
anyway (92%)**



% of teens who have posted...

2007 (A) 2010 (B)

64

82 A

**Photos or videos of
themselves**

56

73 A

**Photos or videos of
friends**

2007 (A) 2010 (B)

69

77 A

Their real age

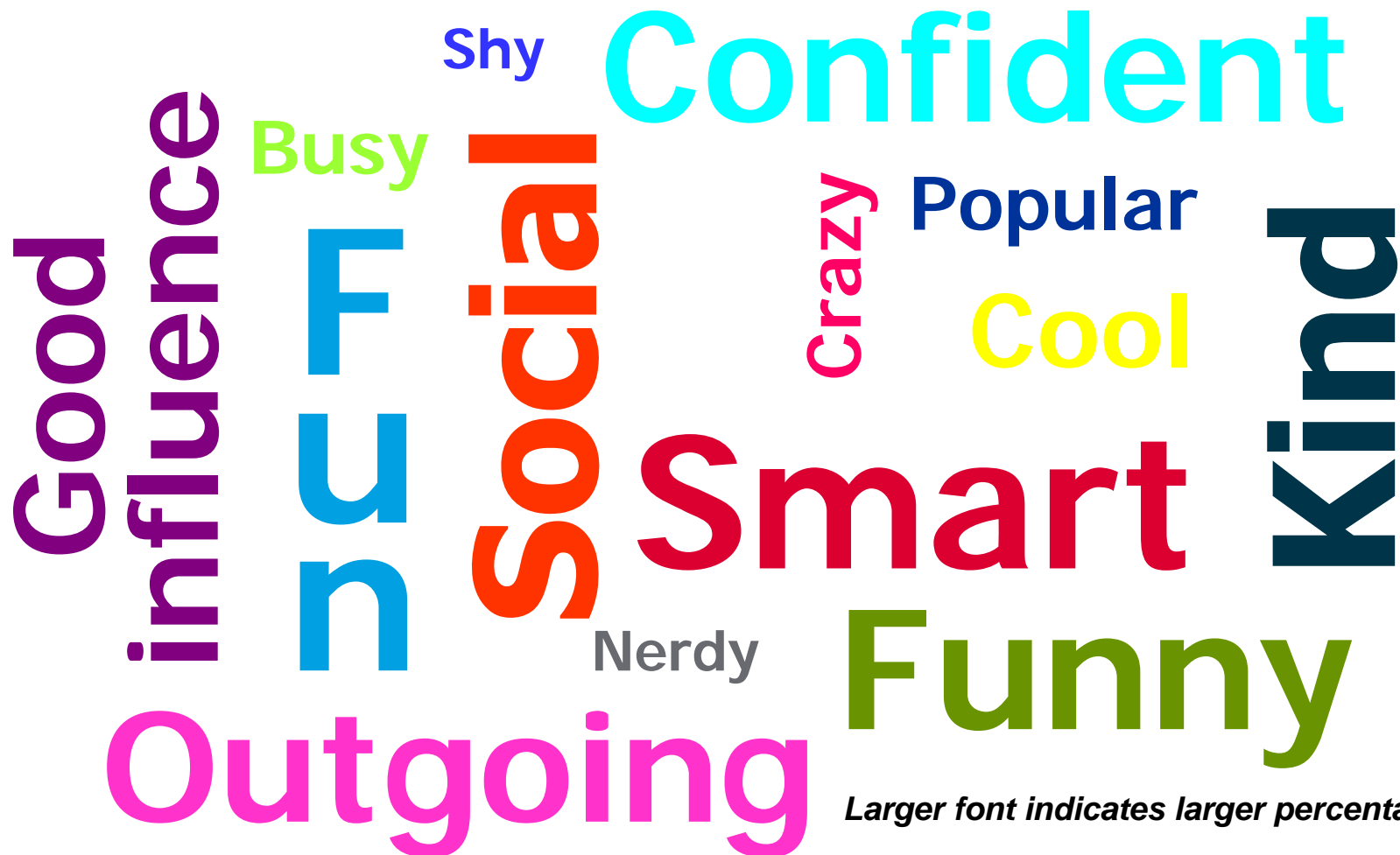
25

50 A

A fake age

Most say their online profiles present them positively

Words teens say peers AND teachers would use to describe them, based only on their online profile



Larger font indicates larger percentage

Most claim this is the same image they project in person

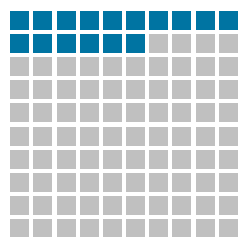


Only
14%

Say their online profiles portray
a *different* image than the
image they portray in person

Few admit to projecting a cooler/different image online...

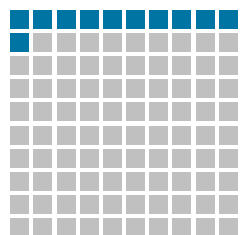
Only **16%**



Agree: *“I use social networks to make myself look cooler than I really am”*



Only **11%**

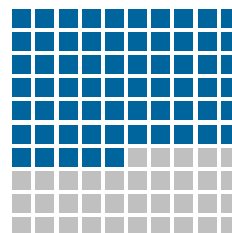


Agree: *“I try to project an online image that is very different from who I am in real-life”*

But they're quick to accuse other teens of doing so

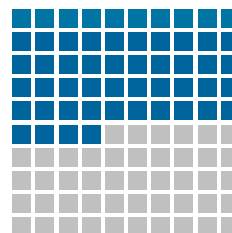


65%



Agree: *“Most people my age use social networks to make themselves look cooler than they really are”*

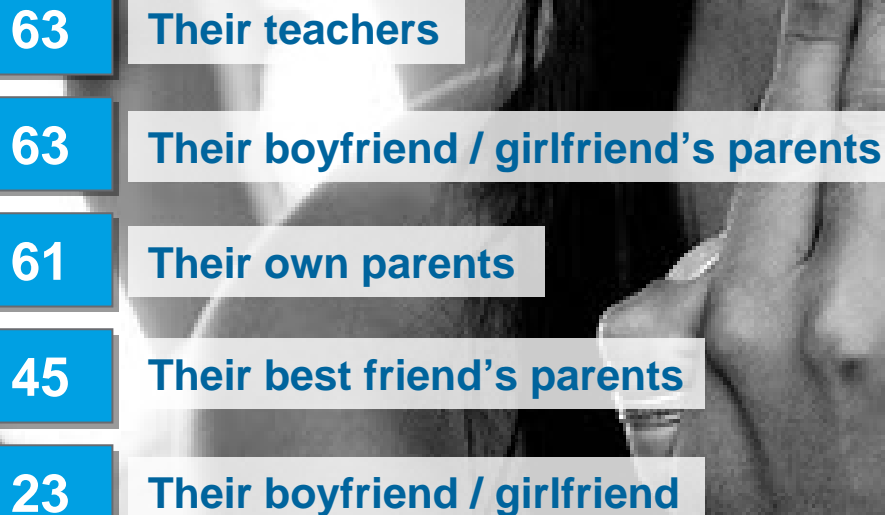
54%



Agree: *“Most people my age try to project an online image that is very different from who they are in real-life”*

Despite their alleged “positive” online image, many would be embarrassed if certain people viewed their profile

% of teens who would be embarrassed if someone viewed their online profile:



Teens don't deny society's dependence on the internet

% of teens who say people today are very reliant on the internet and social media platforms for...

77

Keeping in touch with family

51

Operating a business

57

Staying in touch with current world events

33

Buying a car

55

Staying in touch with local community events

32

Finding a spouse / partner

54

Making new friends

31

Getting an education

52

Finding a job

30

Buying a house

And they expect this reliance will only get stronger

% of teens who say people will rely more on the internet and social media platforms in the next 5 years for...

70

Keeping in touch with family

59

Staying in touch with local community events

65

Finding a job

58

Getting an education

64

Operating a business

55

Finding a spouse / partner

63

Staying in touch with current world events

52

Buying a car

61

Making new friends

51

Buying a house

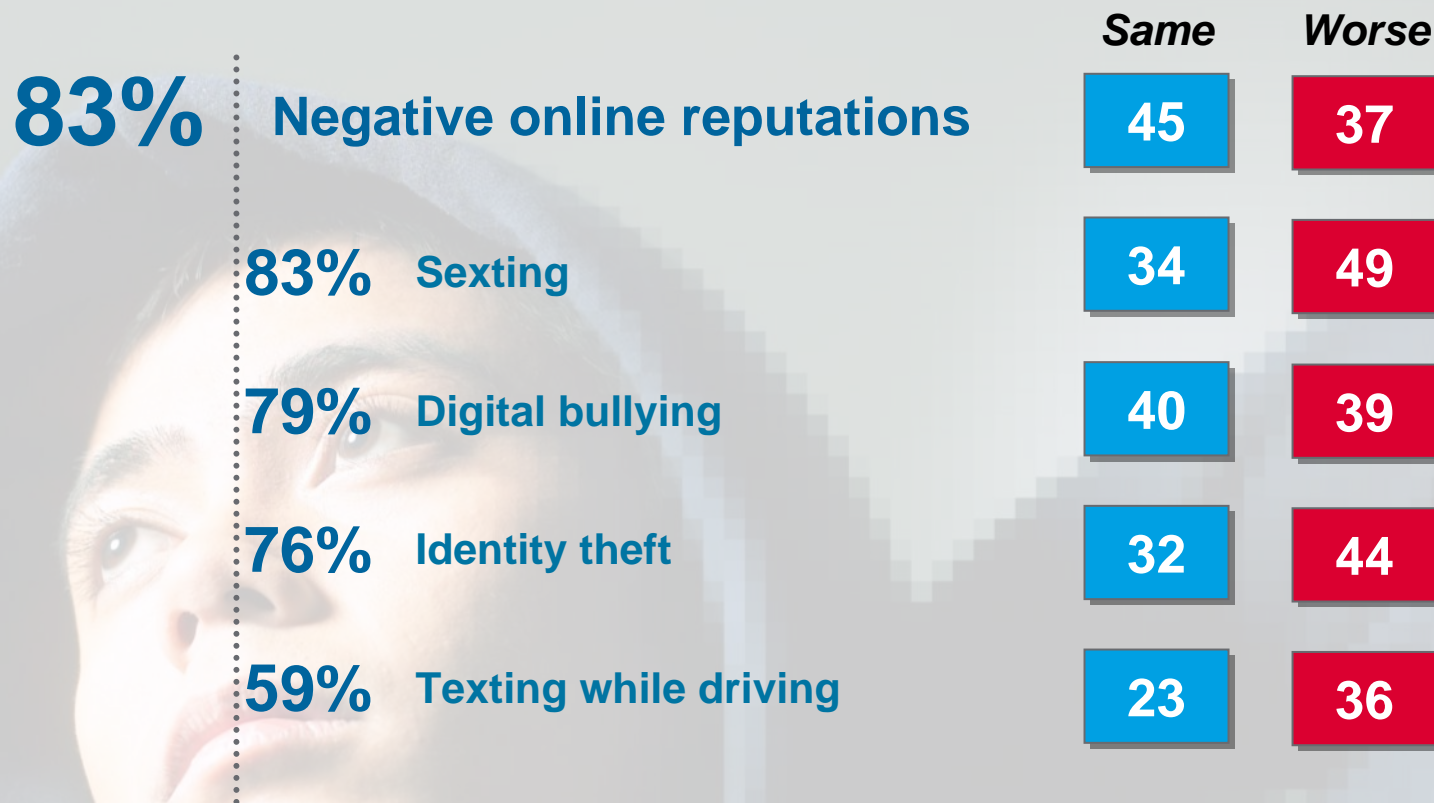
With online dependence come serious online issues

% of teens who consider each as a very serious issue today...



Teens don't expect much improvement in the next 5 years

% of teens who expect each to stay the same or get worse



Their predictions for the future may be a result of the past



The percent who've experienced bullying hasn't changed much in the past few years

2007

57% Harassed or bullied

53% In person

19% Online

2010

56% Harassed or bullied

51% In person

20% Online

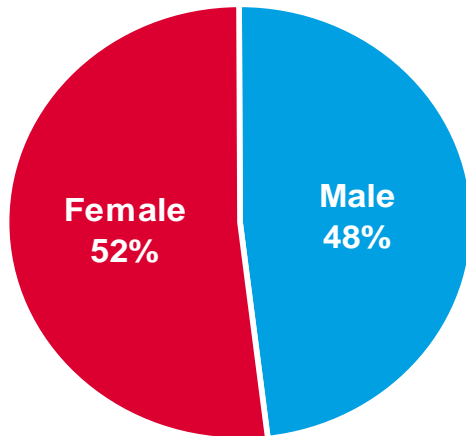
17% Via text message

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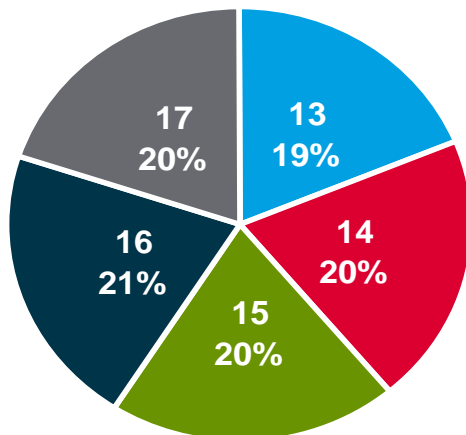
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Gender, age, ethnicity

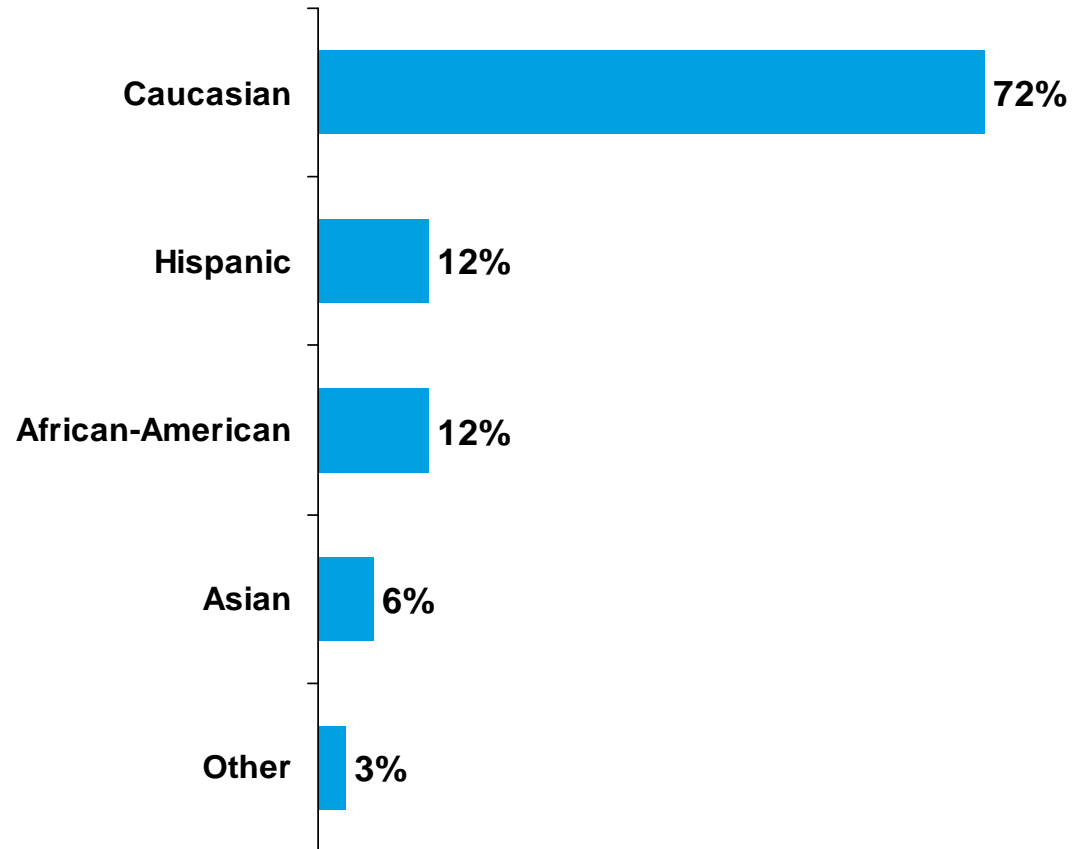
Gender



Age

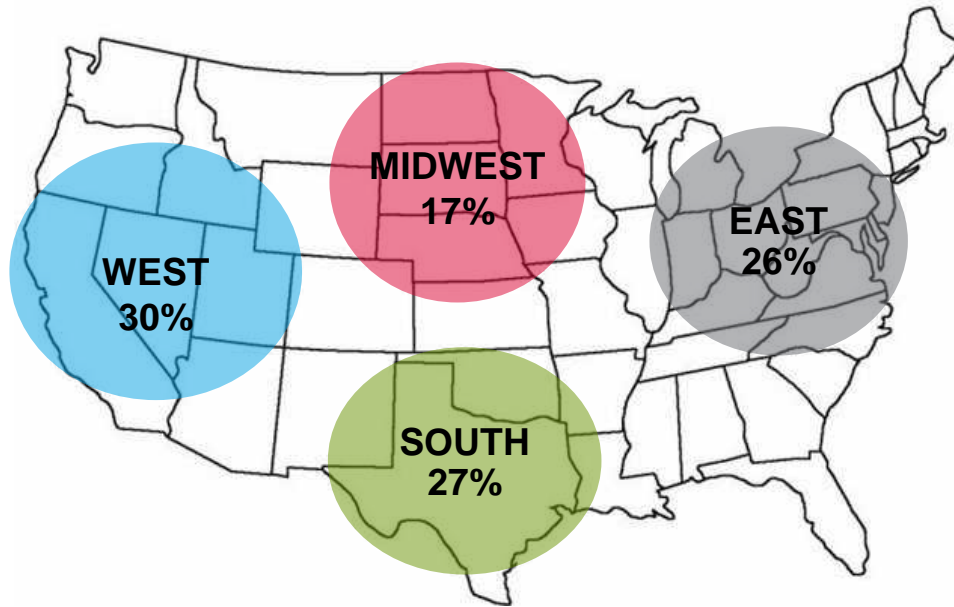


Ethnicity



Place of residence

Region



Urbanicity

