

Current Information on Adolescent Media Issues

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With rapid change being a hallmark of this generation, parents might find it difficult to stay on top of the culture when it comes to adolescent media issues. Knowing what your kids are facing in the culture is key to helping them navigate the sea of adolescence. The following information is provided to help parents gain a better understanding of up to date media issues. Articles and interpretations of research and surveys are not specifically endorsed by HomeWord..

• **YouTube Users Watching Less Television.** A recent Harris Interactive study found that about 42 percent of online adults in the United States said they have watched a YouTube video and 32 percent of frequent YouTube users said they watch less TV as a result. Harris also reported that about 66 percent of YouTube users are blowing off other activities too. They say they spend more time on the video-sharing site to the detriment of visiting other Web sites, e-mailing, social networking, playing video games, watching DVDs and spending time with friends and family, as well. *Source: TV Week.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Parents Fear Kids' Overuse of Media More Than Drinking or Smoking.** American parents are troubled about how much their kids play and interact with media including everything from downloading music onto iPods, social networking on the Internet, playing video games to watching TV. While parents say they are more concerned about their kids' overuse of media – more than drinking or smoking – they appear to be in the dark when it comes to how media impacts the health and well-being of their kids. These are the findings of a new poll released recently by Common Sense Media. *Source: Business Wire.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **No Surprise: More Kids Being Exposed to Online Porn.** More children and teens are being exposed to online pornography, mostly by accidentally viewing sexually explicit websites while surfing the Internet, researchers say. Forty-two percent of Internet users aged 10 to 17 surveyed said they had seen online pornography in a recent 12-month span. Of those, 66% said they did not want to view the images and had not sought them out, University of New Hampshire researchers found. Their conclusions appear in the February issue of the journal *Pediatrics*. *Source: USA Today.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **TV Violence on the Increase.** Violence on broadcast TV is approaching "epidemic proportions," surging 75% over the last six years while posing a threat to children that parents and government officials need to address, according to a recent study from the Parents Television Council, titled "Dying to Entertain." The report revealed that the 2005-06 season was the most violent since the group began tracking the issue in 1998. There were an average of 4.41 violent incidents each prime-time hour last season, based

on the group's analysis of the first two weeks of the ratings sweeps periods. *Source: L.A. Times.*

• **Schools Taking Action to Combat “Cyberbullying.”** School administrators and local officials are struggling with how to handle so-called cyberbullying. As long as there have been kids, there have been bullies. Now, emboldened by the anonymity available online, a bully can be nastier -- and with the click of a mouse, have a far broader audience -- than in the past. What may once have been snickers in the hallway can now be an excruciatingly public humiliation spread via email, text messaging and online teen forums. Educators and state legislatures in Florida, South Carolina, Utah, Oregon and elsewhere are creating new policies that deal with cyberbullying, either incorporating electronic harassment into existing bullying policies, or spelling it out as an entirely new threat. In doing so, they are often crafting language that allows educators to intervene even in off-campus incidents if the activity affects the school environment. *Source: Wall Street Journal.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Webspeak.** If, like most teens today, your child spends hours sending text messages from his phone and instant messages from his computer, you probably have overheard phrases like "LOL" or "BRB," without understanding what they meant. But now, the use of slang and abbreviations is not limited just to e-mails, text messages or instant messages. It is showing up in kids' schoolwork, in their SAT essays and in college admission applications. Sara Goodman, who teaches high school English and journalism at Clarksburg High in Clarksburg, Md., said she worries that this new language will compromise students' ability to write and to communicate. *Source: ABC News.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Top 20 Internet Acronyms Every Parent Needs to Know.** If, like most teens today, your child spends hours sending text messages from his phone and instant messages from his computer, you probably have overheard phrases like "LOL" or "BRB," without understanding what they meant. To read the top 20 Internet acronyms every parent needs to know, [click here](#). *Source: Netlingo.com.*

• **Internet Slang Dictionary and Translator Now Available.** Adults who find themselves confused by net slang and have difficulty reading text messages now have a resource to help. An Internet Slang Dictionary and Translator is now available on the web. *Source: <http://www.Noslang.com>*

• **Media Habits: Men Will be Boys.** When it comes to TV programs and media in general, boys will be boys--and men will be boys. In a new report from Horizon Media, research shows that as boys grow into men and age into their 20s and 30s, they return--or stay--with much of the same TV viewing they enjoyed as kids. "They watch "The Simpsons," Adult Swim, and read Harry Potter," says Brad Adgate, senior vice president and corporate research director for Horizon Media. "They play video games and read comic books." "It's the boomerang effect," says Adgate. "Men in their 30s are moving back to their parents' homes, back to their own bedrooms." Marketers, Adgate says, have names for this trend, such as the "boomerang kids," "kidults" and "Peterpandemonium."

For example, the median age for a video-game player was 29 a few years ago. It used to be below 20. Now the median age is 33. *Source: MediaPost.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Time Magazine Dubs “YouTube” 2006 Invention of the Year.** 2006 was an interesting year in technology. Nintendo invented a video game you control with a magic wand. A new kind of car traveled 3,145 miles on a single gallon of gas. A robot learned to ride a bike. Somebody came up with a nanofabric umbrella that doesn't stay wet. But only YouTube created a new way for millions of people to entertain, educate, shock, rock and grok one another on a scale we've never seen before. That's why it's Time's Invention of the Year for 2006. The revolution was not televised; it was blasted all over the Internet. Social networks, led by MySpace, became mainstream in 2006; millions joined the ranks of bloggers, and citizens learned to use cameras and Web tools to become watchdogs. But few would dispute that there was one clear standout in 2006: the homegrown video site YouTube. *Source: Time Magazine & USA Today.* To read more [click here](#) for the Time Magazine article or [click here](#) for the USA Today article.

• **For Teens, Consuming Media is a Full-Time Job.** According to a study released in December, 2006, Americans aged 13 to 18 spend more than 72 hours a week using electronic media--defined as the Internet, cell phones, television, music and video games. Because teens are known for multitasking, their usage of devices can overlap. So much technology makes teens feel they are playing a starring role in their own reality TV show, said Jim Taylor, vice chairman of the Harrison Group, which conducted the 2006 Teen Trend study. "This generation is unique," Taylor said. "Teen life has become a theatrical, self-directed media production." *Source: CNet News.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Teens Putting Themselves at Risk Online.** The popularity of adolescent blogging on websites such as Xanga and MySpace has been well documented. Now, as teen bloggers continue to post personal information and (often revealing) photos of themselves online, the ‘dark side’ of these blogging services is becoming more apparent. Police in the central Connecticut city of Middletown suspect that as many as seven girls were recently assaulted by men they met on MySpace. “That is a perpetrator's dream come true,” said Middletown Police Sgt. Bill McKenna. McKenna said several Middletown girls, between 12 and 16, told police they met men on the MySpace who claimed to be teenagers. When they met in person, he said, the girls were fondled or had consensual sex with men who turned out to be older than they claimed. “This is a rich and upper-middle-class problem,” said Parry Aftab, an attorney and child advocate who runs WiredSafety.org. “They have too much time, too much technology and their parents aren't around to keep an eye on them.” *Source: USA Today.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Youth Pastors Turn to MySpace to Keep in Touch with Kids.** More youth ministers are discovering the promises and pitfalls of social networking Web sites such as MySpace.com as they use them to stay connected with their students. It's a place where students can be honest about their lives and keep an open dialogue with their ministers. *Source: NorthJersey.com.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Internet, Broadband Use Continues to Grow.** Surveys fielded in 2006 show that Internet penetration among adults in the U.S. has hit an all-time high. While the percentage of Americans who say they use the Internet has continued to fluctuate slightly, our latest survey, fielded February 15 – April 6, 2006 shows that fully 73% of respondents (about 147 million adults) are internet users, up from 66% (about 133 million adults) a January 2005 survey. And the share of Americans who have broadband connections at home has now reached 42% (about 84 million), up from 29% (about 59 million) in January 2005. *Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Teens Largely Avoiding Email.** A new survey by Parks Associates shows that teenagers are less likely to communicate via email than any other demographic. According to the study, less than one-fifth of the 13-17 year olds surveyed profess to using email to communicate with friends, compared to 40 percent of adults aged 25-54. The study shows that instant messaging is the dominant form of communication for teenagers, with one-third of teens relying on the messaging system compared to only 11 percent of adults. The data does not suggest that email will go the way of the dinosaurs. He estimates the teens will eventually need to learn to use email more as they graduate from school and enter the workforce. *Source: ExtremeTech.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Sex in Media as Teen's "Super Peer".** research published in the Journal of Adolescent Health finds that "adolescents who are exposed to more sexual content in their media diets, and who perceive greater support from the media for teen sexual behavior, report more sexual activity and greater intentions to engage in sexual intercourse in the near future." The study goes on to report that, "Media may serve as a kind of sexual 'super peer' for adolescents because sexual content in the media is ubiquitous and easily accessible, and sexual messages are delivered by familiar and attractive models." Researchers investigated the media consumption, sexual activity and intentions of over 1,000 American adolescents aged 12-15, for their study. *Source: Media Life.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **NBC, YouTube Pave Way for Racier Content.** The uncensored "D--k in a Box" video clip over the 2006 holiday season generated 7.5 million views for NBC on YouTube did more than give the "Saturday Night Live" skit greater exposure on the Web than it had on television. It may also illuminate a path for broadcast networks looking for freedom to distribute racier material on the Web than is permitted on public airwaves. "D--k in a Box," a self-parody of pop singer Justin Timberlake's soul crooning, ran on the Internet, including the bad word, after airing on the late-night show with the naughty bit censored out. NBC's Dec. 16, 2006 broadcast, which drew about 7 million viewers, according to Nielsen Media Research, bleeped out the offending word 16 times. On NBC.com, the clip was offered in both a censored version and an unexpurgated one that is preceded by a dialog box warning viewers of the adult content. NBC then posted the unedited version to YouTube. Daniel Weiss, a senior analyst for media and sexuality for James Dobson's Focus on the Family, said NBC's action had the effect of bleeping the version seen by adults while leaving uncensored the version most likely to be seen by children. *Source: TVWeek.com.*

- **Burger King Launches XBOX games.** Burger King has launched its new “King Games” for XBOX, featuring the freaky, but popular teen character, BK’s “The King.” New games include “Sneak King,” “Pocketbike Racer,” and “Big Bumpin’.” The games, rated “E” for “Everyone” are a slick BK marketing tool. *Source: BK Gamer.* For more information, [click here](#).
- **NotePods – Cliff Notes for a New Generation.** Available in text and audio formats, and easily downloaded to iPods or home computers, NotePods have been created specifically for students and offer detailed summaries of required reading. The cost? \$1.99 each. *Source: NotePods.* For more information, [click here](#).
- **Students, Officials Locking Horns Over Blogs.** Kids increasingly are spending their free time blogging and chatting on social networking websites, and school administrators aren't enthusiastic. School boards across the country already have blocked sites such as MySpace and Facebook on school computers. But school districts now are reaching into students' home computers, severely punishing and even expelling students for what they write on those sites from home. The issue has created a free-speech debate between school administrators who are worried about the disruption of the learning process on one hand; and students, parents and First Amendment advocates who are worried about whether overzealous school boards are overstepping their bounds on the other. The debate is beginning to be explored in courts. *Source: USA Today.* To read more, [click here](#).
- **Note to Teens: Be Careful What You Blog.** While the numbers of teens who post web logs (“blogs”) increases, they should be aware that their posts can be read by others who they didn’t intend would see them. Upset by the war in Iraq, Julia Wilson vented her frustrations with President Bush last spring on her Web page on MySpace.com. She posted a picture of the president, scrawled "Kill Bush" across the top and drew a dagger stabbing his outstretched hand. She later replaced her page on the social-networking site after learning in her eighth-grade history class that such threats are a federal offense. It was too late. Federal authorities had found the page and placed Wilson on their checklist. They finally reached her recently in her molecular biology class. The 14-year-old freshman was taken out of class and questioned for about 15 minutes by two Secret Service agents. *Source: USA Today.* To read more, [click here](#).
- **Video Game Sales Soar in September, 2006.** September's video game sales jumped by a whopping 38 percent compared with the year-ago period, according to data from the NPD Group, a market research company. Perhaps even more amazing is the amount of total revenue dollars being generated by the industry: Total video game sales were \$777 million for September ‘06, up from \$563 million in September of 2005. *Source: Yahoo News.*
- **The Times Keep Changing: Demise of Tower Records Marks End of Big Music Retailers.** Declining music sales, increased music downloading and intense competition from big-box stores, like Wal-Mart has driven one-time music retail leader, *Tower*

Records into oblivion. The chain filed for bankruptcy in August, was subsequently sold at auction, its stores have closed, and its inventory is being liquidated. *Source: Chicago Sun Times.*

• **Studying, iPods Don't Mix.** A recent study shows that the ruckus of such multi-tasking such as study, listening to iPods and instant messaging at the same time may make kids learn less, and to use the wrong parts of their brains to store information. The research was released in the Aug. 1 issue of the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science (PNAS) and was done by researchers at UCLA. Nearly all kids have this bad habit, according to a 2005 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, which found that nearly 60 percent of seventh- to 12th-graders interviewed reported multi-tasking — watching TV, listening to music, surfing the Web and chatting online — some or most of the time while doing homework. *Source: Quad City Times / Washington Post.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Internet Threatens MTV.** On the eve of its 25th anniversary, a crisis looms for MTV. The Internet and today's iPod generation has revolutionized the music industry and threatens to leave MTV in the dust. *Source: New Statesman.* To read more, [click here](#).

• **Three in Five Students Have Visited Social Networking Websites Like MySpace.** More than three in five teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 have visited social networking websites, with the majority of those who visit joining the sites, according to a new study of teens' online media habits by *Burst Media*. Other findings: 40% of male teens spend an average of three hours per day on the Internet, compared to 35% of female teens. Overall, 18% of teens spend two to three hours online per day, 25% spend one to two hours online per day, and 20% say they spend less than one hour online per day. Today's teens spend about as much time on the Internet, on average, as they do watching television. *Source: Media Post Publications.* To read more, [click here](#).