



Cox Communications Online Safety Research Report (213224338) v1

Prepared for Cox Communications | Prepared by The Futures Company |

Background & Objectives

- > As part of an ongoing commitment to encouraging safe and healthy online behavior among youth, Cox Communications sought to gain deeper understanding around online behavior that potentially places teens at risk. Cox Communications commissioned its long-time research partner, TRU/TFC, to conduct a survey among teens across 13 select states.

Quantitative Methodology in Brief

- > TRU conducted a total of 1,329 online interviews among teens ages 13-17. These interviews were conducted across the following 13 states (n=100 per state): Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Virginia.
 - > All respondents were required to spend at least some time online each day to qualify for the survey.
 - > Interviews were distributed evenly by age and gender.
 - > The total sample of n=1,329 was comprised of 18% African-American and 13% Hispanic respondents.
- > The total sample of n=1,329 yields a margin of error of +/- 2.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The total sample of n=100 per state yields a margin of error of +/- 9.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The interviews were conducted from June 4-25, 2013. Key findings from the survey appear below.

Executive Summary

- > Today's teens reside comfortably in an online world of constant connection. They spend more than a third of their time awake online. Nearly all are active on one or more social networks.
- > Mobile devices are the go-to gateway to the internet for teens, and *not* just because teens are constantly on the move! Teens commonly use mobile devices to access the internet even when they are at home.
- > This constant connection places teens at risk. Some post personal information, such as location or contact info, and others post questionable – and even sexual content, making them vulnerable to the advances of strangers or bullies.
- > In fact, three in five teens have received an online personal message from someone they don't know.
 - > For most, the first reaction is to ignore and/or block the sender.
 - > Yet, curiosity gets the best of some teens. Nearly one in three responded to personal messages from strangers to find out who the sender was. One in five teens has considered meeting someone in person who they had first met online, though only one in 10 has actually done so.
- > This connectedness to strangers permeates the realm of gaming as well: Two in three teens interact with fellow gamers online, and many are connected through their social networks. Some have considered meeting their online gaming peers in real life, but far fewer actually have done so.
- > Though conversations about online safety are seemingly taking place in the home, little more is being done by parents to monitor teens' online activities. Further, many teens admit to purposely hiding their online activity from parents, leaving parents in the dark about what is really going on.



Implications

- > Continued awareness and education of online dangers is needed for both parents and teens!
 - > Teens must be made aware of the dangers of posting risky information online, be it personal information that can attract unwanted attention from strangers/bullies, or offensive posts, such as curse words or sexual content, that can have ramifications on their reputation and potentially affect future education or career opportunities!
 - > Parents must be jolted out of their complacency and come to terms with what is really going on under their noses. Conversations are a good start, but it cannot stop there. Parents must actively monitor their teens' online behaviors and take measures to protect them from the dangers that lurk in the online world.
 - It's important that online monitoring extends across devices – from desktops to mobile devices. Though mobile monitoring presents a greater challenge, mobile devices offer a shield of privacy, likely increasing teens' online vulnerability.

Detailed Summary

I. The internet has become a natural habitat for teens.

- > **Teens spend as much time online each day as many of them spend in the classroom.**
 - > On average, teens say they spend nearly 6 hours a day online, including time spent online at school.
 - No surprise, older teens spend more time online than younger teens. (6+ hours vs. 5 ½ hours a day)
 - African-Americans (6 hours, 52 minutes a day) and Hispanics (6 hours, 50 minutes a day) claim to spend more time online than Caucasians (5 hours, 23 minutes a day).
- > **They're using a variety of devices to go online, including multiple mobile devices.**
 - > 83% Desktop
 - > 66% Gaming console
 - > 97% use a mobile device to go online.
 - 84% Laptop
 - 71% Smartphone
 - 52% MP3 Player with internet access
 - 46% Tablet
 - 40% Handheld gaming device with internet access
 - 28% E-reader with internet access



- > And, the majority of this online activity – including mobile – is taking place at home.

<i>Devices used to access internet...</i>	At home	Away from home
Desktop	61%	51%
Gaming console	61%	19%
<i>Any Mobile Device (NET)</i>	95%	78%
Laptop	73%	37%
Smartphone	64%	48%
MP3 Player with internet access	47%	31%
Tablet	37%	22%
Handheld gaming device with internet access	34%	18%
E-reader with internet access	20%	14%

II. This constant connectivity combined with poor judgment places teens at risk.

- > Almost all teens belong to a social network or other community site, and many use these sites daily.

- > 99% ever use a social network or community site; 83% log on to these sites every day.

<i>Social network usage</i>	Ever Use	Use daily
<i>Any (NET)</i>	99%	83%
YouTube	96%	52%
Facebook	83%	53%
Skype	52%	7%
Twitter	50%	23%
Instagram	48%	27%
Facetime	36%	5%
Tumblr	32%	11%
Pinterest	29%	7%
Snapchat	29%	10%
Kik	22%	9%
Ask.fm	18%	3%
Myspace	13%	1%
Tagged	9%	1%
Meetup	6%	0%

- > Teens are highly active on these sites, posting a variety of photos and videos of their lives.

- > 73% have posted photos or videos of themselves (69%), friends (57%), and/or family members (52%).

- > However, more than one in five admit to posting questionable content online.

- > Twenty-two percent have posted curse words (21%) and/or sexual posts online (5%).

- This number jumps to 28% among 16-17s – 26% have posted curse words, and 6% have made sexual posts online.

- > They're also posting potentially dangerous contact information, such as their cell phone number (21%), their physical location (19%), and even their address (12%) online.

- Again, this behavior is more pronounced among older teens – 26% have posted their cell phone number, 21% have posted their physical location, and 14% have posted their address online.



- > Further, 69% say they sometimes, if not always, check in to a location via a social network or other location based site.
 - 51% personally check themselves in to a location.
 - 60% say their friends check them in to a location.
- > **This behavior makes them susceptible to online predators!**
- > **In fact, 61% say they've received a personal message from someone they didn't know (66% among older teens).**
 - > The most common reaction to these messages is to ignore them (67%) and/or block them from sending more messages (36%).
 - > Nearly one in three (29%) responded to find out who was sending the message.
 - > One in five (22%) told someone.
 - > However, 16% kept it to themselves, and 12% actually replied to the message.
- > **A few have even met someone in person whom they had first met online.**
 - > Nearly one in five (18%) have considered meeting someone in person whom they had first met online.
 - This jumps to one in four (24%) among 16-17s.
 - > One in 10 (9%) have actually done so.
 - 12% among 16-17s.
 - > And, nearly one in three (30%) say their friends have met with someone in person whom they first met online.
 - 36% of 16-17s.

III. Harmless as it may seem, online gaming poses additional threats to teens.

- > **On average, teens spend 3 hours a day playing online games.**
 - > Predictably, males spend more time playing online games (3 hours, 40 minutes per day vs. 2 hours, 15 minutes for females).
- > **Gaming consoles and laptops are the most common gaming devices; More teens use a smartphone to play games than a hand-held gaming device.**
 - > Gaming console 56%
 - > Laptop 56%
 - > Desktop 48%
 - > Smartphone 47%
 - > Handheld gaming device 28%
 - > Tablet 26%



- > **More than two in three teens (68%) interact with their fellow gamers.**
 - > 42% interact via web text chat.
 - > 41% interact via voice chat.
 - > 13% interact via web cam chat.
 - > Two in three (67%) are social network friends with their fellow gamers.
- > **And, a few have even met their online gaming peers in person.**
 - > Nearly one in five have considered meeting someone in person whom they had first met playing online games or have friends who have done so.
 - 17% have considered meeting someone in person whom they had first met playing online games.
 - 18% have friends who have met someone in person whom they had first met playing online games.
 - > About one in 10 (8%) have actually met someone in person whom they had first met playing online games.

IV. Online bullying remains a serious concern for teens – including teen gamers.

- > Three in 10 teens (31%) claim to have been bullied online.
 - Most of this bullying (26%) has taken place via general online activities.
 - However, 15% of online gamers say they have been bullied while playing online games.
- > Only 41% of those who have been bullied have told an adult.
- > **Some have even bullied others!**
 - > One in 10 teens (10%) admit they've bullied someone online (13% among 16-17s).
 - 8% of this bullying has taken place via general online activities (10% among 16-17s).
 - 5% of online gamers have bullied someone while gaming (7% among 16-17s).

V. Parents are talking to their teens about online safety, but they're doing little to *protect* them.

- > **Most teens claim to have had a recent conversation about internet safety with their parents.**
 - > 84% say their parents have EVER talked to them about internet safety (88% among 13-15s).
 - 77% of these teens say these conversations have occurred within the past year (83% among 13-15s).



- > However, parents may be relying too heavily on these conversations to keep their teens safe. Fewer than half of all teens say their online activity is monitored by parents.
 - > Predictably, teens' *mobile* online activity is far less restricted than online activity at home.

Parents have done the following to monitor internet devices used...	At home	Away from home
Nothing	54%	65%
Internet Software (NET)	25%	13%
Installed internet software that blocks certain websites	20%	9%
Installed internet software that logs your online activity	14%	9%
Other	27%	24%

- > Further, many teens admit to taking actions to keep their parents in the dark about what they do online.
 - > Half (50%) of teens have taken some action to hide their online activity from their parents (56% among 16-17s).
 - 48% have cleared their search history and/or cookies on their browser (52% among 16-17s).
 - One in five (20%) have used a private browsing feature so their parents can't see which sites they've visited (24% among 16-17s).
 - A few (5%) have even disabled the software their parents installed on an internet device (7% among 16-17s).