

# TRENDS & TUDES

Keeping you connected to today's youth audience

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## EDITORIAL

### Our Take On It



#### Joe Porus

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Let's step back from all those statistical graphs and decimal points and focus on what the numbers are whispering to us. Here's what I'm hearing...

Teenagers today are the first generation born into a mature mobile market. To them mobile technology is like indoor plumbing to the rest of us; it's taken for granted and they just can't picture life without it. In fact, the study implies that teens have truly become immersed in this technology. In many ways it has defined them. For example, the mobile phone is the one of the most important personal pieces of electronics they own; more important than their TV and even their precious portable music player. Amazingly teens know more about cell phone models and wireless plans than their favorite band or sports team.

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## Keep Up if You Can: Teens Are Taking Cellular Use to New Levels

Today's teens live in a world saturated by technology – and they embrace it with open arms. This is just one of the many findings from *A Generation Unplugged* – presented by Harris Interactive at the CTIA Wireless, IT and Entertainment Conference in September 2008. For this study, more than 2,000 teens (ages 13-19) from every corner of the U.S. were asked over 100 questions about how mobile technology has shaped their lives as well as what capabilities they hope to see in the future for this technology. As revealed by the research, cell phones are quickly becoming a social necessity among teens, positively transforming the art of communication for this age segment.



Today's teens express their dependence on their cell phones in dramatic terms – four in ten (40%) say they would die without their phone and nearly half



(45%) agree that having a cell phone is the key to their social lives. Owning a cell phone is more essential to a teen's life than having an iPod®, TV, video game system, or portable gaming device. In fact, half of teens (52%) report that communicating via cell phone with their friends has really become a new form of entertainment. Teens are able to chat, play games, shop online, surf the Internet, and send text, picture, or video messages using their phones. However, these findings do not mean that teens are unreasonable about their desire for mobility; they still place much higher value on having good health, good friends and freedom.

Of course, cell phone communication is not just talk; texting is huge with this generation. In fact, teens are spending

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Now all of this is a very powerful cocktail. It appears that never before in history has an electronic gadget so defined a generation. And this craze has far eclipsed the hula hoop and the pet rock. In fact, if you sit back in a cozy arm chair and really think about this study and force yourself to come up with a theme... well here's the one I settled on; "Mobility Defines a Generation and Now a Generation Redefines Mobility." But wait, I've jumped ahead of the story line with that theme. Read on.



Certainly today's teens have taken to mobile technology like ducks to water. Adults often struggle to navigate through owner's manuals but teens find it all intuitive and are hungry for more. The future is all about this hunger teens have. To me, it's fundamentally different than the rest of the market. Adults, for example might wish for clearer, bigger screens and longer battery life while teens want this and much more. They see future mobile devices replacing credit cards, and allowing them to vote. Ideally, devices will be as thin as a piece of paper that can fold out to any desired size and project holographic 3D images. Teens' hunger is far more demanding and the bar is placed extremely high. What they really want is structural change in society and the enabling force behind this is mobile technology.

Teens envision a mobile education environment where they can attend classes via their device anywhere on earth. Ditto for the workplace – all employees should be connected virtually on their mobile. Period. And what about entertainment? Here again, teens see a reengineering of

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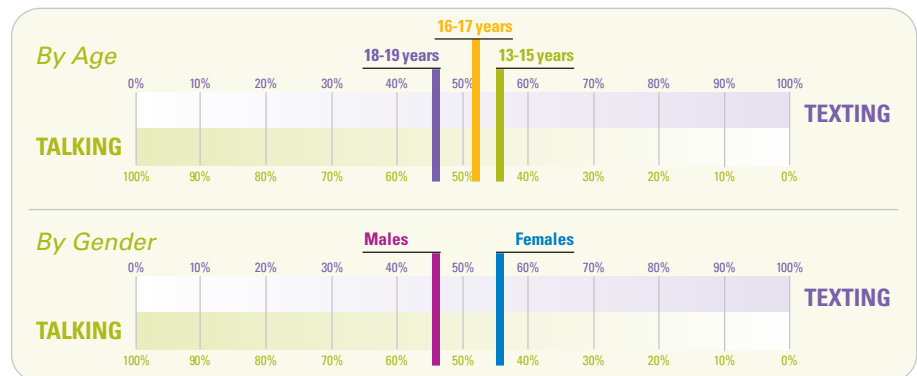
nearly the same amount of time texting on their mobile devices as they are talking on them. Texting matches teens' fast paced lifestyles, with a near majority saying that they feel it allows them to multi-task (46%) and communicate quickly (42%). Texting is fun for teens; they are able to stay connected throughout the day and receive immediate gratification with quick responses

from their family and friends. Why call and waste time with the "Hello, How are you?" when you can send a text directly to the point? Girls and younger teens are slightly more inclined to text rather than talk, while boys and older teens lean more toward talking. As further evidence of teens' facility with texting, nearly half (42%) say they are able to text blindfolded!

### Teens Spend Near Equal Time Talking and Texting

*How much of the time on your cell phone is spent doing each of the following?*

*Base: All respondents; n=2,189*

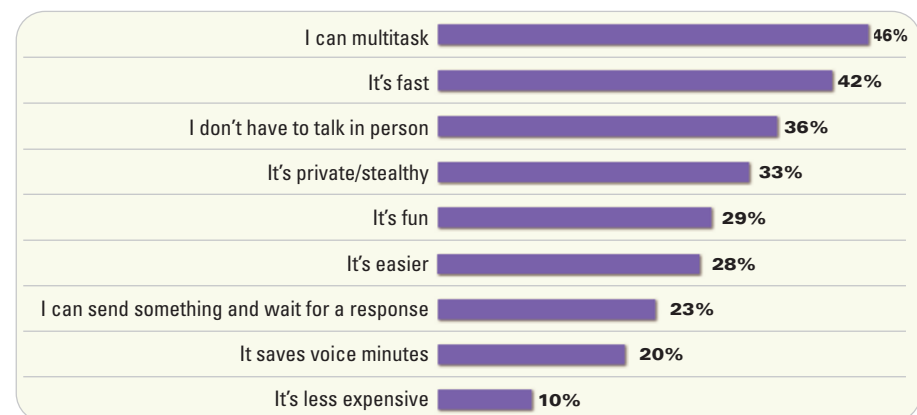


Source: CTIA and Harris Interactive. "A Generation Unplugged" (July 2008).

### Why Teens Like Texting

*What do you like most about texting on your cell phone? Please select your top 3 choices.*

*Base: Like texting; n=1,845*



Source: CTIA and Harris Interactive. "A Generation Unplugged" (July 2008).

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the entertainment industry to meet their needs. Why can't the theatre experience be delivered to my mobile in all its glory? These visions of the future show how much teens expect and it should be sending shock waves across multiple industries (entertainment, travel, finance, internet, even fashion)!

Let's sit back in that arm chair one more time and think about this. When have teens placed so much hope in an industry to shape their future? Certainly teens have always been entertainment minded but this has never really shaped their view of the future (Ok, maybe the 60's but we got over it). So something special is going on right now. Teens are realizing exciting possibilities and they are seeing the enabler in mobile technology. If you read between the lines of this report you will also find evidence that teens believe we can increase global communication and problem solving, address environmental issues and rebuild many of the basic building blocks of our society. Perhaps we all should give teens some credit here.

Their wish list for the future is not cooler phones with more bells and whistles. It's change with a capital "C." Bravo! Now you should understand the second half of my theme. Remember, "A Generation Redefines Mobility." Clearly, teenagers will be making their voices known to the mobile industry and they are bringing their hopes and dreams with them for a better future. One final thought to consider: Imagine taking a modern cell phone from today back in time 25 years when cell phones were just hitting the market for the first time. Today's device would be pure science fiction. Flat color screen? What's the internet? GPS navigation with satellite you say? You get the idea. Well, 25 years into the future our cell phones will be dinosaurs. We can not even imagine what those devices will be then. Our best guess... go ask a teenager!

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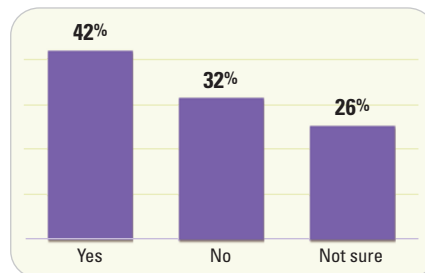
**Keep Up if You Can:  
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**Many Teens Say They Can Text Without Looking at the Keypad**

*Could you effectively text blindfolded or without looking at your keypad?*

*Base: Send or receive text messages; n=1,815*



*Source: CTIA and Harris Interactive. "A Generation Unplugged" (July 2008).*

Around six in ten (57%) teens say that having a cell phone has improved the quality of their lives – most prominently through providing a sense of security while on-the-go. Teens view their cell phone as a critical tool for finding a ride (79%), retrieving important information (51%), or helping out someone in need (35%). Furthermore, teens are confident

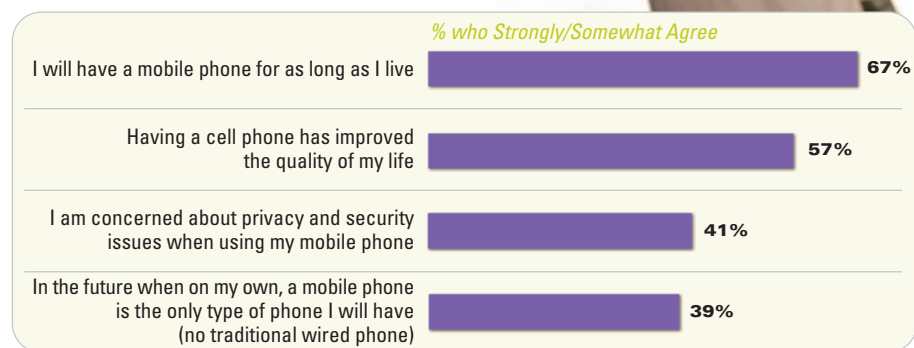
**Teen's Beliefs About the Impact of Cell Phones On Their Lives**

*How do you feel about the following statements?*

*Base: Group 2 respondents; n=1,071*

*Cell phones impact people's lives in different ways. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about cell phones?*

*Base: All respondents; n=2,189*



*Source: CTIA and Harris Interactive. "A Generation Unplugged" (July 2008).*

that ownership of a cell phone will continue all throughout their lives. Over two-thirds (67%) agree they will have a mobile phone for as long as they live. Some even think that a mobile phone is the only type of phone they will have in the future when they are on their own (39%). However, some teens still worry about privacy and security issues when using a mobile phone (41%). Many are uncomfortable with the idea of developing a GPS mobile feature with the capability of pinpointing their location (36% hate it). In fact, many teens (58%) say that the ideal mobile device would contain a privacy screen to prevent others from viewing their interactions.

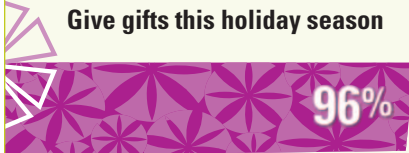


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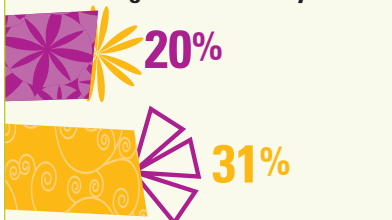
# TRENDS & TUDES

## Economy Leads to Less Gift Giving and Spending; Boosts Homemade Gifts by 50%

Give gifts this holiday season

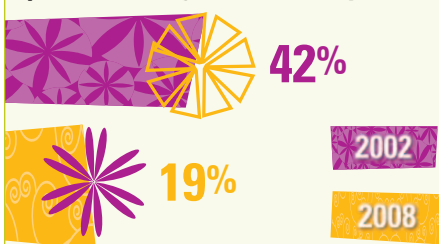


Make gifts this holiday season



31%

Spend more on gifts this holiday season



- Seven in ten youth (72%) said that due to the economy, their family would be making changes to their holiday plans including cutting back on gift giving for family and friends, not going out to eat and not going on a family vacation.
- Yet being together with family is still by far the most important aspect of the holidays for youth (54%). In contrast to giving and receiving gifts (15%), getting time off from work or school (15%), and celebrating the religious aspect (10%).

Harris Interactive, October YouthQuery™:  
October 17 – October 22, 2002

Harris Interactive, November YouthQuery:  
November 20 – December 1, 2008

Will you give holiday presents to others this holiday season?  
BASE: 2002 (n=1,177), 2008 (n=1,392)

Will you mostly buy gifts or make gifts for others?  
BASE: 2002 (n=1,140), 2008 (n=1,245)

Do you expect that you will spend more money on holiday gifts than you did last year? BASE: 2002 (n=917), 2008 (n=862)

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As time passes and technology continues to advance, each generation becomes increasingly more tech-savvy and their demands and expectations for mobile devices continue to grow. Younger teens (ages 13-15) claim to know more about cell phones, carriers and service plans than their older peers. Perhaps this is because they were born into the most mature phase of this technology and have understood it from a younger age than even the older teens in their own generation. Many service providers now offer cell phones designed for children and tweens, which are primarily used to give children access to emergency contact numbers, introducing the next generation to this technology at a young age.

Teens are on the cutting edge of mobile technology; where others may not wish to see change, or like the way things are, teens actively seek out what is new and progressive. If they were able to text their order to a restaurant, 57% of teens say they would do so at least some of the time. Furthermore, two-thirds (67%) of this generation would like to be able to translate any language instantly on their cell phone and three-fourths (74%) think having an emergency transmitter on their cell would be useful. Looking to the future, two in five teens (44%)

would like to someday be able to use their phones to vote!

While the cell phone is extremely important to teens, it hasn't yet topped the irreplaceable appeal of the Internet. Two-thirds (67%) of teens say having the Internet available is valuable compared to just over half (54%) who say the same about having a phone and wireless service. Might this trend change down the



road? If the cell phone continues to evolve in such a convergent manner as teens are hoping it will, we may see a switch in these preferences. In the eyes of teens, when it comes to their mobile devices, the possibilities are endless.

Interested in learning more about teens and their mobile phone usage? A full report of these findings is available for purchase. For further information about the full report please contact Sarah Craig at [SCraig@HarrisInteractive.com](mailto:SCraig@HarrisInteractive.com).

## Contact Us

To make suggestions regarding this newsletter or to discuss a business issue involving youth or the people and issues that influence today's youth, please contact us at 877.919.4765 or [info@harrisinteractive.com](mailto:info@harrisinteractive.com).

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