Teens, Stranger Contact & Cyberbullying
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Overall
- 94% of American teens ages 12 to 17 go online. 75% of American adults 18 and older go online.
- 58% of online teens have profiles online; 42% of online teens do not have profiles online.

Unwanted Contact:
Teens are occasionally contacted online by people unknown to them and their family and friends. In some cases, this could be a peer looking for friends, or playing a joke. It could be a band, or a product, or any of the other groups or individuals using the internet and particularly social networks to promote themselves or raise awareness for their cause. And sometimes it is someone who is really and truly unknown to the young person and is perhaps contacting them with less-than-perfect intentions.

- 32% of online teens have been contacted by strangers online – this could be any kind of online contact, not necessarily contact through social network sites.
- 65% of teens who have been contacted said that they ignored or deleted the contact.
- 21% of teens who have been contacted by strangers have engaged an online stranger to find out more information about that person (that translates to 7% of all online teens).
- 23% of teens who have been contacted by a stranger online say they felt scared or uncomfortable because of the online encounter (that also translates to 7% of all online teens).
- Independent of all other factors, posting photos online, having an online profile, being female and using the internet to flirt correlates with an increased likelihood of online stranger contact.
- Independent of all other factors, being female is what predicts an increased likelihood of stranger contact and being made to feel uncomfortable because of it.

Online Harassment
32% of online teens have experienced one of the forms of online harassment (also sometimes called "cyberbullying") listed below. Girls and social network users are more likely to report experiencing at least one of these behaviors.

- 15% of teens reported having private material (IM, txt, email) forwarded without permission
- 13% had received threatening messages
- 13% said someone had spread a rumor about them online
- 6% had someone post an embarrassing picture of them online without permission

Teen Tactics to Protect Privacy:
Teens with social networking profiles engage in a variety of tactics to protect their privacy online – some make their profile private, others post false information, and the majority limit the amount of information they share at all.

- Among the teens who have profiles, 66% of them say that their profile is not visible to all internet users. They limit access to their profiles in some way.
- Among those whose profiles can be accessed by anyone online, 46% say they give at least a little and sometimes a good deal of false information on their profiles. Teens post fake information to protect themselves, but also to be playful or silly.

- 6% of online teens and 11% of profile-owning teens post their first and last names on publicly-accessible profiles.
- 3% of online teens and 5% of profile-owning teens disclose their full names, photos of themselves and the town where they live in publicly-viewable profiles.

Parents Protect Online Teens:
Parents generally think that the internet is a good thing for their children, but few give their children unfettered access at home. Most teens whose online behavior is monitored by their parents recognize that they are being observed.

- 53% of parents say they have filtering software on the computer their child uses at home.
- Teens are generally aware that there are filters on their home computers. Half (50%) of teens who go online from home say that the computer they use at home has a filter that keeps them from going to certain websites.
- 45% of parents have monitoring software that records what users do online.
- Teens are also relatively aware of monitoring software on their home computers, though less aware than they are of filtering. About a third of teens (35%) with internet access at home believe that there is monitoring software on their home computer.
- 65% of parents report checking up on their teens after they go online.
- Teens are now more aware that their parents are "checking up" on them after they go online; 41% of teens who go online from home believe that their parents monitor them after they have gone online, up from 33% in 2004 and 27% in 2000.
- Home computers are still overwhelmingly located in open family areas of the home; 74% of teens now say the computer they use is in a public place in the home, compared with 73% in 2004 and 70% in 2000.

More Households have Rules about Internet Use than Other Media
The internet is a more regulated piece of technology than the television or video game console. Parents are more likely to restrict the type of content their children view online, as well as the amount of time spent on the internet when compared with other media.

- 85% of parents of online teens say they have rules about internet sites their child can or cannot visit.
- 75% of parents of online teens say they have rules about the television shows their child can watch.
- 65% of parents of online teens say they restrict the kinds of video games their child can play.
- 85% of parents of online teens say they have established rules about the kinds of personal information their child can share with people they talk to on the internet.
- 69% say they have household rules for how long a teen can spend online, compared with 57% of parents of online teens who say they restrict the amount of time their child spends watching TV, and the 58% who limit time spent playing video games.

Methodology

This study was conducted in two parts; first we conducted a series of six in-person focus groups and later one online focus group with middle and high school students in two American cities in June of 2006. Second we fielded a nationally-representative call back telephone survey of 935 parent–teen pairs. We interviewed teens who were between the ages of 12 and 17. This survey was fielded between October 23, 2006 and November 19, 2006 and has an overall margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points. The data points in the "Overall" section come from our November 2007 rdd nationally-representative telephone survey of Teens & Parents on Writing.

The data presented here is from our "Teens, Privacy & Online Social Networks," "Teens & Online Stranger Contact" & "Cyberbullying" reports, available at http://www.pewinternet.org