

## TEEN HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY PHASE ONE FOCUS GROUPS: METHODOLOGY REPORT

December 2011

Harris Interactive Inc. conducted the *Benefits and Risks of the Online World for Adolescents* qualitative research study on behalf of Internet Solutions for Kids (ISK). The purpose of this study was to inform and provide guidance for a subsequent quantitative survey designed to evaluate the benefits and risks of the online world to teens and, in particular, the benefits and risks associated with being online for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. In order to explore this topic, three online bulletin boards were conducted in May 2009 with 14 to 18 year olds in grades 10 to 12 in the US. Two of the groups were conducted with LGBT teens and the third group was with a nationwide group of non-LGBT teens. Each of the three groups ran for four days with a new set of questions posted to the boards on each of the first three days.

### About Online Bulletin Boards

An online bulletin board focus group is an online discussion held over an extended period of time with participants responding at their own convenience, while a moderator monitors throughout. Respondents commit to visiting the boards for a specified amount of time (approximately 35-40 minutes a day) over a specified period of time (usually three to four days) and reply to pre-programmed question sets while the live moderator asks follow-up probes. Clients can send private prompts to the moderator (from their observation room) to probe further on specific responses as they see fit. Bulletin boards provide access to hard to reach groups, have multimedia capabilities, and facilitate communication among respondents.

### Recruitment and Participation

For the **non-LGBT, nationwide group**, which was conducted on May 19-21, 2009, 30 teens were recruited and of those, 26 assented and participated in all 3 days of the group. Potential participants were recruited from the Harris Poll Online panel and received an email invitation to participate in the study. If they were interested, they contacted Harris by email. Those who sent an email to Harris were then screened by phone by a trained interviewer and those who met the screening criteria and were available to participate were admitted to the online focus group (see Appendix A for screener). The qualification criteria for participation were that the teen was between the ages of 14 and 18; in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade; currently resided in the United States; had Internet access at home or a friend/family member's home; spent 2 hours a week or more online; and demonstrated a level of articulation. All participants in the non-LGBT, nationwide group identified as straight/heterosexual. Harris recruited the group to achieve a mix of participants by the following characteristics: grade, school type, race/ethnicity, gender, parent education, urbanicity, U.S. region, and Internet use. All recruited participants were

asked to give formal participation assent via email (see Appendix B for assent form). Each participant received a \$50 gift card for his or her participation.

Two **LGBT groups** were also conducted. The first LGBT group was conducted on May 12-14, 2009; 25 teens were recruited and of those, 18 assented and participated in all 3 days of the group. The second LGBT group was conducted on May 19-21, 2009; 20 teens were recruited and of those, 15 assented and participated in all 3 days of the group. Participants initially received information about the study from GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) via email or through GLSEN’s National School Climate Survey. Youth who were interested in participating were instructed to contact Harris Interactive by email. Similar to the nationwide group, those who sent an email to Harris were then screened by phone (see Appendix A for screener). Those who met the screening criteria and were available to participate were admitted to the group. The qualification criteria for participation in the LGBT groups were that the teen was between the ages of 14 and 18; in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade; currently resided in the United States; had Internet access at home or a friend/family member’s home; spent 2 hours a week or more online; demonstrated a level of articulation; and identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer or transgender. Harris recruited each LGBT group to achieve a mix of participants by the following characteristics: grade, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, parent education, urbanicity, U.S. region, and Internet use. All recruited participants were asked to give formal participation assent via email (see Appendix B for assent form). Each participant received a \$50 gift card for his or her participation.

Recruitment and Participation Summary

	Non-LGBT Nationwide Group May 19-21	LGBT Group 1 May 12-14	LGBT Group 2 May 19-21
Recruited	30	25	20
Provided assent*	26	19	17
Partially participated <i>Suspended participation prior to day 3</i>	0	1	2
Fully participated <i>Completed all 3 days</i>	26	18	15

\*Assent was obtained during or after the time the group was conducted. Those who did not provide assent were removed from the groups and transcripts.

**Online Security and Confidentiality**

The platform Harris uses for online focus groups require usernames and passwords to log-in, creating a secure environment. To protect the identify of participants, Harris used the participants’ first name and last initial to identify them in group 1 and for groups 2 and 3, only first names were displayed on screen. Also, respondents were instructed against posting any

personally identifiable information, such as email address, last name, etc., on the boards. A moderator closely monitored the boards and removed any personally identifiable information that was posted.

### **Guide Development**

The Harris team overseeing the research included Dana Markow, Robyn Bell, Michelle Cooper, and Bonnie Hill. The bulletin board discussion guides (see Appendix C) were developed in partnership by the ISK team, lead by Michele Ybarra, GLSEN, and Harris. Bonnie Hill served as a moderator for the discussions.

APPENDIX A:  
RECRUITMENT SCREENER

Study #: J36332  
Teen Recruitment Screener

Recruitment goal: 70 participants (40 for LGBT groups/30 for National group) for three online bulletin board groups to be conducted over three days.

Segments: 1 - Nationwide group recruited from HPOL  
2 - LGBT groups recruited from client (GLSEN) e-mails

Dates: May 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> we will conduct 1<sup>st</sup> LGBT Bulletin Board  
May 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> we will conduct 2<sup>nd</sup> LGBT Board and Nationwide Board

Quotas: Q2 – Mix of grades  
Q3 – 3-4 non-public school (nationwide group only)  
Q4 – Mix of urban, suburban and rural  
Q5a/b – Mix of parent education  
Q6 – Mix of ethnicity  
Q7b – Mix of gender  
Q11 – Mix of public/private space users  
Q12 – Mix of heavy, medium, light Internet users  
Q15 – Mix by US region

Sample from GLSEN & HPOL

Incentive is \$50 gift card

Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION:**

**Introduction for GLSEN recruits:**

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ calling on behalf of Harris Interactive, a professional research firm. You recently expressed interest in participating in a research project about teens and their Internet usage habits. We would like to ask you a few questions on a confidential basis and tell you a bit more about the research. It will only take a few minutes, and I assure you that no sales effort is involved.

**Introduction for HPOL recruits:**

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ calling on behalf of Harris Interactive, a professional research firm. You recently expressed interest in participating in a research project about teens and their Internet usage habits. We would like to ask you a few questions on a confidential basis and tell you a bit more about the research. It will only take a few minutes, and I assure you that no sales effort is involved.

- Q1 First, how old are you?
- Less than 14 years old .....(1) TERMINATE
  - 14.....(2) CONTINUE
  - 15.....(3) CONTINUE
  - 16.....(4) CONTINUE
  - 17.....(5) CONTINUE
  - 18.....(6) CONTINUE
  - More than 18 years old .....(7) TERMINATE

- Q2 What grade of school are you currently in?
- Less than 8<sup>th</sup> Grade .....(1) TERMINATE
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade .....(2) TERMINATE
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade .....(3) TERMINATE
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade .....(4) CONTINUE
  - 11<sup>th</sup> Grade .....(5) CONTINUE
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade .....(6) CONTINUE
  - Out of High School.....(7) TERMINATE
- RECRUIT A MIX. MUST BE 14-18 AND CURRENTLY IN 10<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

- Q3 What type of school do you go to? (READ LIST)
- Public.....(1) CONTINUE
  - Private.....(2) CONTINUE
  - Parochial.....(3) CONTINUE
  - Home schooled.....(4) CONTINUE
- FOR NATIONAL GROUP, RECRUIT 3-4 STUDENTS WHO DO NOT GO TO PUBLIC SCHOOL**

- Q4 Would you consider the area in which you live to be?
- Urban..... (1) CONTINUE
  - Suburban..... (2) CONTINUE
  - Rural ..... (3) CONTINUE

**RECRUIT A MIX**

- Q5a What is the highest level of education that your mother completed? (DO NOT READ LIST UNLESS NECESSARY)

- Less than high school ..... (1) CONTINUE
- Some high school..... (2) CONTINUE
- Completed high school..... (3) CONTINUE
- Some college ..... (4) CONTINUE
- Associates degree ..... (5) CONTINUE
- Completed college ..... (6) CONTINUE
- Some graduate school ..... (7) CONTINUE
- Graduate degree or higher..... (8) CONTINUE
- Not sure..... (9) CONTINUE

- Q5b What is the highest level of education that your father completed? (DO NOT READ LIST UNLESS NECESSARY)

- Less than high school ..... (1) CONTINUE
- Some high school..... (2) CONTINUE
- Completed high school..... (3) CONTINUE
- Some college ..... (4) CONTINUE
- Associates degree ..... (5) CONTINUE
- Completed college ..... (6) CONTINUE
- Some graduate school ..... (7) CONTINUE
- Graduate degree or higher..... (8) CONTINUE
- Not sure..... (9) CONTINUE

**RECRUIT A MIX BASED ON HIGHEST LEVEL FROM Q5a AND Q5b**

- Q6 How would you best describe your race or ethnicity?
- Hispanic..... (1) CONTINUE
  - African American or Black ..... (2) CONTINUE
  - White or Caucasian..... (3) CONTINUE
  - Asian ..... (4) CONTINUE
  - Other ..... (5) CONTINUE
- Record Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**RECRUIT A MIX**

Q7a How would you describe your sexual orientation? (READ LIST IF NECESSARY OR IF THE INITIAL RESPONSE DOES NOT MATCH ANY OF THE RESPONSE OPTIONS BELOW. REMIND OF CONFIDENTIALITY IF NECESSARY)

- Gay.....(1) CONTINUE
- Lesbian .....(2) CONTINUE
- Straight/Heterosexual.....(3) CONTINUE
- Bisexual/Pansexual .....(4) CONTINUE
- Questioning.....(5) THANK AND TERM
- Queer.....(6) CONTINUE
- Decline to answer .....(7) CONTINUE

DO NOT READ THIS RESPONSE:

*Respondent is unsure what sexual orientation means* ....(8) CONTINUE

INTERVIEWER: IF OPTIONS ABOVE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT, PLEASE RECORD SEXUAL ORIENTATION BELOW AND ADVISE RESEARCH TEAM.

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Q7b How would you describe your gender? (DO NOT READ LIST)

- Male.....(1) CONTINUE
- Female.....(2) CONTINUE
- Transgender .....(3) SKIP Q7c

RECORD OTHER RESPONSE BELOW:

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**RECRUIT AN EQUAL MIX OF MALES AND FEMALES**

Q7c Do you identify as transgender? (DO NOT READ LIST)

- Yes.....(1) CONTINUE
- No .....(2) CONTINUE
- Decline to answer .....(3) CONTINUE
- Respondent is unsure what transgender means* .....(4) CONTINUE

PLACE IN **LGBT** GROUP IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ARE TRUE:

- Q7a IS GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL OR QUEER
- Q7b IS TRANSGENDER
- Q7c IS YES

TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, RECRUIT A MIX OF GAY/LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER BY GENDER.

ALL OTHERS GO TO **NATIONWIDE** GROUP.

**\*\*ONLY ALLOW 1-2 GLSEN RECRUITS IN NATIONWIDE GROUP\*\***

Q8 Do you use the Internet?  
 Yes.....(1) CONTINUE  
 No .....(2) THANK AND TERM

Q9 Where do you use the Internet? (READ LIST AND RECORD AS MANY AS APPLY)  
 At home.....(1) CONTINUE  
 At a friend or family member’s home.....(2) CONTINUE  
 At school.....(3) TERM IF NOT 1/2  
 At the library .....(4) TERM IF NOT 1/2  
 Where else do you use the Internet?

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Q10 And what type of Internet access do you have when you use the computer at home [IF ‘At home’ IS NOT SELECTED AT Q9, ASK ABOUT INTERNET ACCESS AT FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER’S HOME]?  
 High speed (such as DSL or cable) .....(1) CONTINUE  
 Dial up .....(2) CONTINUE  
 A WebTV connection .....(3) THANK AND TERM IF ONLY TYPE OF ACCESS

Q11 Where do you access the Internet when you’re at home [IF ‘At home’ IS NOT SELECTED AT Q9, ASK ABOUT USAGE AT FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER’S HOME]? (READ LIST AND RECORD AS MANY AS APPLY)  
 A bedroom .....(1) CONTINUE  
 The family room or kitchen .....(2) CONTINUE  
 A home library .....(3) CONTINUE  
 The basement .....(4) CONTINUE  
 Other .....(5) CONTINUE  
 RECORD OTHER RESPONSE

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**RECRUIT A MIX OF PUBLIC (HAS BEDROOM ACCESS)/PRIVATE (DOES NOT HAVE BEDROOM ACCESS)**



Q12 Thinking about a typical week, about how many hours per week do you spend online?  
Your best guess is fine. (READ LIST IF NECESSARY)

- Less than 2 hours .....(1) THANK AND TERM
- 2 to 7 hours (AVG UP TO 1 HR/DAY) .....(2) CONTINUE
- 8 to 14 hours (AVG UP TO 2 HR/DAY) .....(3) CONTINUE
- 15 to 21 hours (AVG UP TO 3 HR/DAY) .....(4) CONTINUE
- 22 to 35 hours (AVG UP TO 5 HR/DAY) .....(5) CONTINUE
- More than 35 hours (AVG MORE THAN 5 HR/DAY) .....(6) CONTINUE

**RECRUIT A MIX OF HEAVY (22 hours +), MEDIUM (8-21 hours), LIGHT USERS (2-7 hours)**

Q13 What types of activities do you do online? (READ LIST AND RECORD AS MANY AS APPLY)

- Homework.....(1) CONTINUE
- E-Mail .....(2) CONTINUE
- Gaming .....(3) CONTINUE
- Social networking (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter) .....(4) CONTINUE
- Instant messaging .....(6) CONTINUE
- Blogging.....(6) CONTINUE
- Shopping .....(5) CONTINUE
- Other .....(6) CONTINUE

Q14 What is your favorite website and Why?\_(RECORD BELOW) [INTERVIEWER NOTE:  
RESPONDENT MUST BE REASONABLY ARTICULATE IN ENGLISH, ABLE TO ARTICULATE AND  
EXPLAIN ANSWER TO ABOVE]

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Q15 Finally, please tell me what state you live in. (RECORD ANSWER BELOW)

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**RECRUIT A MIX BY US REGION**

**If qualified, invitation for Bulletin Board Group:**

Based on your responses, we would like to invite you to participate in an online “Bulletin Board.” It is a style of focus group where you will come to a website each day to respond to a series of questions and interact with other respondents about those questions. Usually, people enjoy these conversations, which are like a moderated blog. In this study, we would ask you to go to the Internet site two or three times a day to respond to some questions we ask, and provide additional information or comments. It would require about 35-40 minutes each day, but you can go in and out of the site at your convenience since it does not occur in “real time.” In order to be completely comfortable to answer the questions as you wish, we suggest that you answer every day’s questions in a place where you are comfortable and in a relatively private place.

**LGBT GROUP:**

You will be asked to participate on either Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> OR Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>.

**NATIONAL GROUP:**

We will be hosting the Bulletin Board from Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, May 21<sup>th</sup>.

To thank you for your time and opinions, we are offering a **\$50 gift card** for your participation.

Are you available to participate?

Yes..... (1)

No, qualified refusal ..... (2)

**RECORD CONTACT INFO**

\_\_\_\_\_

So that we may send you detailed instructions along with the URL and your username and password, could I please have your email address?

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**[RECONFIRM E-MAIL ADDRESS, READ BACK VERBATIM LETTER-BY-LETTER, AND ASK FOR CASE SENSITIVES (E.G. AOL ADDRESSES)]**

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

For **GLSEN** recruits only:

How did you find out about this study?

Through GLSEN directly.....(1)

A friend.....(2)

An online survey .....(3)

Don't know.....(4)

Other .....(5)

INTERVIEWER: IF OTHER, RECORD HERE.

\_\_\_\_\_

For **ALL**

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_, we look forward to your participation! We will be sending you an e-mail confirming your participation and giving you instructions for accessing the online discussion. If you have any questions, please call xxxxxxxxxx.