



Connecting Generations:

Microsoft

Collaborative research sponsored by AARP and Microsoft

AARP and Microsoft conducted a joint research project to examine how computers, mobile devices and the Internet are changing the way we communicate. What we discovered is that online communication and social networking are helping family members keep in touch, enriching their relationships and connecting generations in new ways. However, as more and more of us go online, people of all ages are increasingly concerned about Internet risks and want to learn more about staying safer online.

Going online increases quality and frequency of family communication

A majority of those surveyed (83 percent), including at least eight in 10 in each age group, considers going online to be a “helpful” form of communication among family members. Teenage respondents say the computer increases both the quantity (70 percent) and quality (67 percent) of their communication with family members living far away. Similarly, those age 39+ also embrace these sentiments (63 percent and 57 percent, respectively).

Bridging the generations: Online communication promotes understanding

Although more and better communication does not necessarily close the generation gap, a sizable number of respondents in all age groups says going online actually helps them to better understand other family members or helps other family members better understand them.

Follow me: People want their families to use social media more

Nearly one third (30 percent) of all respondents say they would like their family to communicate more through social networking sites. But, older family members should expect to feel some familial “peer pressure” coming from their younger relatives: Younger respondents (age 13-25) are significantly more likely than older ones to want their families to increase their use of social media for staying in touch (52 percent vs. 21 percent).



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30%

Of all respondents say they would like their family to communicate more through social networking sites.



3 in 10 grandparents (30 percent) and teens/young adults (29 percent) agree that connecting online has helped them better understand the other.

Teens <3 (heart) texting: The generations have different views on texting and emailing

Asked how they would like to stay connected with their families (regardless of current practices), 63 percent of those age 13-25 select text messaging over other modes of communication. But, their elders may LOL if young people want to text them: only 31 percent of those in the 39-75 age group want to use text messaging to communicate with family members. Segmenting this group further makes the generational pattern even more apparent: those age 39-58 are twice as likely to want to text family members versus those aged 59-75 (40 percent vs. 19 percent).

The generational pattern is reversed when it comes to email. The oldest age group (59-75) slightly prefers email more than the next-oldest (39-58) (60 percent vs. 56 percent), while email is apparently becoming passé to the two younger groups; 46 percent of those age 18-25 and 36 percent of those age 13-17 want to use email to communicate with family members.

The writing is on the (Facebook) wall: More communication is moving online

Online communication may only have been around for about a generation, but it is already closing in on the telephone as the most commonly used mode of communication, especially among young people.

Of those age 39-75, 75 percent name the phone and 54 percent name some type of computer as the "one or two devices" they use most often. A bellwether of things to come: the gap between computers (61 percent) and the phone (69 percent) is even narrower among teens and young adults (age 13-25).

Block that content: Both parents and children want to separate family and social life

Younger respondents are more private about their personal social-networking content compared to older respondents. Younger respondents are also split (47 percent) when it comes to how much information they share with their parents and how much content they restrict. Another 15 percent report not allowing their parents to access any of their social-networking content. Teens are also more likely than young adults to restrict how much of their content their grandparents can access (47 percent vs. 38 percent).

However, blocking is clearly a two-way street. Many parents (32 percent) restrict how much of their social-networking content they allow their teenage children to access, while a smaller proportion (14 percent) of parents of young adults impose such restrictions. The desire to keep a separation

between family life and social life is a widely cited reason – among all ages surveyed – for not wanting to share social-networking content with family members. Both parents and younger respondents report concerns that other people may post comments on their “wall” in a way they don’t like, and that their content is too personal to share. And, in fact, teens and young adults express a significantly greater concern than the older respondents (combined 30 percent vs. 4 percent) about being embarrassed by what their family might post on their sites or by what they might think of them.

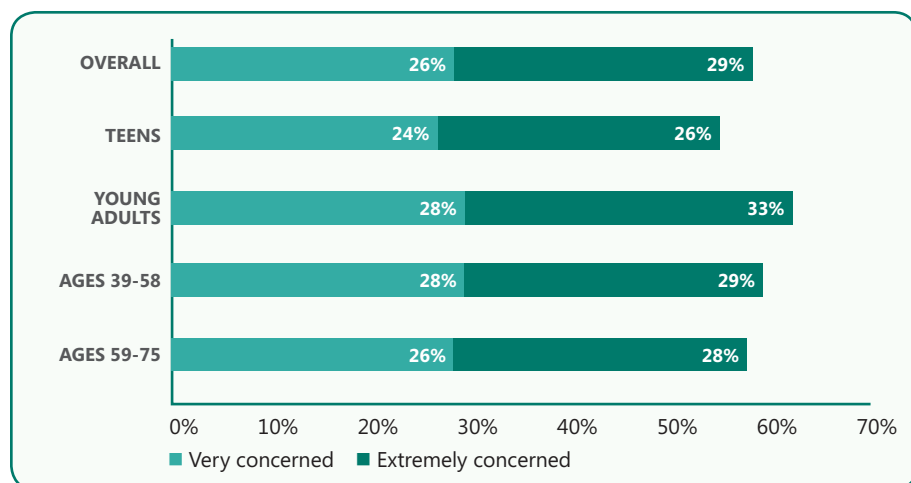
Risky business: All age groups concerned about online safety

Strikingly, almost all respondents (98 percent) across all age groups report feeling “at ease” going online.

Despite recognizing the positive aspects associated with going online and using social networks, some respondents have reservations about doing so. A majority (56 percent) of all respondents is extremely or very concerned about staying safe and secure online, with young adults expressing more concern than teenagers (60 percent vs. 50 percent). In addition, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of parents and grandparents of teenagers report being extremely or very concerned about online safety risks such as identity theft, harassment, or malicious software potentially affecting them and their family.

In addition, the younger generation would like more general information than the older one about using social networks more safely (38 percent vs. 27 percent).

How concerned are you about staying safe and secure online?



The most frequently cited online safety items that respondents wish they knew more about include:

58% 

How to keep sensitive personal information private

50% 

How to safeguard their devices

37% 

Protecting online assets such as reputation, photos, and rewards from loyalty programs

Who you gonna call? Parents overstate teens' willingness to discuss online safety with them

Interestingly, there is a divide between teens' behavior in dealing with uncomfortable online content and their parents' perception of how teens deal with this content. Nearly half (49 percent) of parents state that teens know to come to them when they see something online that makes them uncomfortable. Yet, fewer than a third (29 percent) of teens report having that knowledge.

Online safety is ageless: Teach yourself and your family about using Internet-connected devices and online technologies more safely

> Use social networks more safely

- Look for **Settings** or **Options** in services like Facebook and Twitter to manage who can see your profile or photos tagged with your name, how people can search for you and make comments, and how to block people.
- Don't post anything you wouldn't want to see on a billboard.
- Be selective about accepting friends. Regularly reassess who has access to your pages, and review what they post about you.

> Protect sensitive personal information

- Before you enter sensitive data, look for signs that a webpage is secure—a web address with https and a closed padlock (🔒) beside it.
- Never give sensitive info (like an account number or password) or call a number in response to a request in email or IM or on a social network.
- Think carefully before you respond to pleas for money from "family members," deals that sound too good to be true, or other possible scams.

> Parents and grandparents - have regular conversations with kids, keeping communications open

- Negotiate clear guidelines for web, mobile, and online game use that fit your children's maturity level and your family's values.
- Watch kids for signs of Internet bullying, such as being upset when online or a reluctance to go to school.
- Be the administrator of your home computer. Use age-appropriate family-safety settings to help keep track of what your kids are doing online.
- Pay attention to what kids do and who they meet online.

More info

For more online safety guidance and helpful tools, visit:

www.microsoft.com/security

www.facebook.com/saferonline

www.aarp.org/technology/safer-internet

www.twitter.com/aarptech

www.stopthinkconnect.org

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