

# **The Millennial Generation: A Faithful New Community**

**John Brink (April 30, 2007)**

## **Background**

The Millennial Generation (MG) is thrust into the midst of a world with the ability to report, discuss, and define significant events in a matter of minutes due to extraordinary technology. In the tragedy at Virginia Tech University on April 16, 2007, cell phones announced the tragedy even before the university could assess and announce emergency procedures. Parents text messaged (TM) their kids to check on their safety. Cell phones of students who had already died were ringing as helpless EMTs tried to ignore the sound.

On the academic front, college students illegally download and exchange data during examinations via handheld devices and laptops. Text messaging in high schools is more prevalent than note-taking from a classroom lecture on any topic. The culture of technology has expanded the reach of the MG far beyond the imagination of their parents, most of whom are “Baby Boomers.”

An observer of culture at Boston University seated in the George Sherman Union, frequented primarily by undergraduate students due to the Union’s proximity to undergraduate classrooms, will notice the MG in full form and function. The heart of BU culture is apparent and discernible. Who could possibly resist the temptation from iPod’s marketing campaign that tells kids to “Look like a rock star.” Says iPod:

Your music says a lot about you. So should your iPod nano. A super-slim design says you always have room for music — up to 2,000 songs, in fact. Durable anodized aluminum says you won’t let the rough and tumble of everyday life ruin your groove. And one of five colors says whatever you want. Choose your hue and make a statement.

The vast majority of students appear to be in fashion lockstep heightened by their access to internet fashion and technology ads. One can observe nearly every young woman in the winter wearing some combination of Prada sunglasses([www.prada.com](http://www.prada.com)), North Face jacket ([www.thenorthface.com](http://www.thenorthface.com)), Ugg boots ([www.uggs.com](http://www.uggs.com)), Old Navy ([www.oldnavy.com](http://www.oldnavy.com)) jeans, and the requisite layered shirt approach – and sporting an iPod ([www.apple.com/ipodnano](http://www.apple.com/ipodnano)) and color-cased cell phone. Virtually every young woman who buys coffee at Starbucks with a “Terrier Card” looks remarkably like the next one in line. The highly popular movie about our current cultural norms, *The Devil Wears Prada*, is alive at BU.

The young men are not much different. Young male BU students sport the same iPod and Northface jacket as their female counterparts. Most guys wear Nike ([www.nike.com](http://www.nike.com)) or Roos ([www.roos.com](http://www.roos.com)) athletic shoes drowned out by low hanging jeans that are typically unacquainted with the washing machine. Guys wear un-ironed Gap ([www.gap.com](http://www.gap.com)) shirts or

Aeropostale ([www.aeropostale.com](http://www.aeropostale.com)) shirts and cargo pants with striking regularity and predictability.

This project will explore the question of where is the individual or individuality in this snapshot of students at BU? How does a young person stand out, or do they even wish to do so? What is the definition and benefit of any type of community life? Is it possible to develop a spiritual identity in the midst of seeming cultural requirements that everyone look alike, down to the sunglasses and color of one's cell phone?

In the groundbreaking book on the millennial generation, *Millennials Rising*, authors Howe and Strauss present a guidebook for parents, employers, teachers, and pastors. Whatever the world thought of the X Generation, the Millennials consider themselves so different they avoid the Y Generation tag, preferring instead The Millennial Generation for their moniker

### **Meet the Millennials**

The new generation has arrived. Actually, they began arriving in 1982 and were all here by 2000. The MG do not wish to be called anything that links them to their predecessors – including the Gen X, Boomer, Silent, G.I. and Lost Generation. This is a different generation of kids and young adults in many ways. The emergence of discernible differentiation between generations, and particularly successive generations, is not remarkable. Given the state of the world, the MG is poised to bring considerable change to a world culture made smaller due to instant communication, rapid travel, and ever-changing diversity in countries, cities, schools, and universities. More will likely be expected of this generation than that of their forerunners, Gen X. The time is ripe; the world is ready for significant change. This project will explore how the profile of the MG is consistent with my own research sample and reveals an unexpected desire for community that is supportive to the development of the individual. The MG is grounded in vastly different ways than were their predecessors. There are more like their parents, more connected to their parents, and more likely to value their community life and identity.

### **Demographics**

<b>Generation name</b>	<b>Range of years</b>	<b>Most significant event</b>
Millennial	1982-2000	Columbine massacre, 9/11 in 2001
Gen X	1961-1981	Kennedy assassination
Boomers	1943-1960	Korea, WW II
Silent	1925-1942	The Great Depression
G.I.	1901-1924	WW I

### **Identity and Trends**

Howe and Strauss call Millennials “the Good News generation,” saying “The Millennials’ attitudes and behaviors represent a sharp break from Generation X, and are running exactly counter to trends launched by the Boomers” (Howe and Strauss, 7). They observe:

- *This is the “found” generation.* Not the lost generation, the MG is the result of a birth surge following declines in birth rates for Gen Xers. In 1998, the U.S. population of children exploded, causing a increase in college applications in 2001-2003 of 300,000 people (Howe and Strauss, 7).

- *This is the optimist's generation.* Surveys showed 9 of 10 Millennials used terms such as “happy, confident, and positive” to describe their generation.
- *This is a co-operative, team-oriented generation.* Group activity is popular, and community service is not rejected in favor of “selfish behavior of the Xers.” Millennials say they believe in their collective power. By a ten to one margin, they believe that their generation will do the most to help the environment over the next twenty-five years (Howe and Strauss, 8).
- *This generation accepts authority.* “Nine of ten surveyed agreed with their parents’ values, trust them, and feel close to them” (Howe and Strauss, 8).
- *This generation follows the rules.* Major crime (homicide, violent crime), abortion, and pregnancy rates have dropped as the MG has moved into high school and college. “Even including the Columbine Massacre, there were half as many violent deaths at schools nationwide in 1998-99 (25) as there were in the early 1990s (over 50 per year)” (Howe and Strauss, 8).
- *The most watched generation ever.* The MG is the most supervised, structured, parent-hovered generation ever. They baby-sit, volunteer, follow curfews, and study more than any generation on record.
- *This generation is smart and accomplished.* During the 1990s average aptitude tests have risen for every racial and ethnic group. Eight of ten surveyed say they “Like going to school and that it’s cool to be smart” (Howe and Strauss, 9).
- *This generation sees itself differently from Gen X.* By a two to one margin, high school surveys showed the MG feels Gen Xers had a negative reputation and, therefore, rejected the Gen Y succession name to separate themselves from their predecessors (Howe and Strauss, 10).

## Surveys

In addition to the student and teacher surveys found online at [www.millennialsrising.com](http://www.millennialsrising.com), this report refers to my own surveys, administered via questionnaire, of 12 BU School of Theology students (Exhibit I) and 26 Senior High Youth Group members from United Church of Christ Congregational, Norwell, MA (Exhibit II) ([www.eventkeeper.com/custom/uccn](http://www.eventkeeper.com/custom/uccn)).

My questionnaire was designed to engage Millennials on a variety of topics to assess how they are aligned with current cultural trends: fashion, technology, relationships, faith, family, friends, and individuality. The last portion of the survey (pages 3, 4, 5) is designed to elicit respondents’ self-assessment of their connection and commitment to their faith life and practices.

The first group consists of 12 graduate students at Boston University School of Theology ranging in age from 22 to 29. The second group consists of 26 members of the UCC Norwell Senior High Youth Group ranging in age from 14 to 18. The survey was anonymous and administered in a classroom setting at Boston University and a Sunday night meeting of the Senior High Youth Group at UCC Norwell.

## **Summary of Findings**

In the following, the BU School of Theology cohort is referred to as “MG1” and the UCC Norwell Senior High Youth Group cohort is referred to as “MG2.” Both groups fit the MG definition – MG1 ranges in age from 22-29 years and MG2 ranges in age from 14-18 years.

### **Culture and Life Segment**

- All MG1 have both cell phones and laptops, while only half of MG2 have computers and half do not have cell phones, iPods, or iTunes accounts.
- Half of MG1 have cars, while one third of MG2s have cars.
- Nearly all of MG1 use Facebook (11 of 12), while 60% (16 of 26) of MG2 use Facebook and/or MySpace (11 of 26). Nearly all of MG1 never use chatrooms (10 of 12), while nearly all MG2 seldom or never use chatrooms (23 of 26).
- All of MG1 use computers and surf the internet, while nearly all (22 of 26) of MG2 have the same habits.
- Three fourths (8 of 12) of MG1 rank family as the community most important to them, citing friends as an equally important community. Conversely, virtually all of MG2 rank family as the most important community to them (25 of 26).
- While over 80% of both groups feel a sense of belonging to their community, over 75% of both groups describe themselves as “individualists” rather than “group members.”
- Three fourths of MG1 rank meals with friends as the first or second most important activity of their community life, whereas all of MG2 ranked hanging out as their first or second most important community activity. Drinking or binge drinking was of little interest to either of the groups surveyed.
- Interestingly, 66% of MG1 identified intimacy is the first or second greatest benefit of their community, while friendship was cited by 60% as the second most important benefit from their community life. On the other hand, 80% of MG2 identified friendship as the first or second greatest benefit of their community life. A further defining point was made by both groups in saying that the least important benefit of their community life is “being held accountable by the community.” Both groups seem to value relationship over personal challenge.
- The majority of both MG1 and MG2 get their news from the internet, supporting the reported decline of the print news media.
- MG1 presented a limited and more sophisticated TV-watching palate as over half of MG1 chose Grey’s Anatomy as their primary show. More than half of MG2 identified Family Guy and the Simpsons as their primary TV shows.

### **Faith and Spirituality Segment**

- Nearly all of MG1 profess belief in God, while 73% (19 of 25) of MG2 profess belief in God, with 19% undecided (5 of 26).
- All of MG1 consider themselves spiritual people, while virtually all of MG2 (25 of 26) self-identify as spiritual people.

- While nearly all of both groups attended church as a kid, nearly all of MG1 (10 of 12) say they attend worship every week, while only 80% of MG2 say they attend worship every week.
- No member of either group attends worship on the internet.
- 85% of the total respondents claim they are Protestants, with the remaining 15% claiming they are Catholic.
- Only 10% of the total respondents (38) claim any spiritual practices other than standard worship

## **Conclusions**

The 38 respondents to the survey are Millennials living in the midst of highly secular, technologically oriented communities, one of which is geographically isolated on the South Shore of Massachusetts. They are aligned in most areas of questioning and place greatest value on family and friends, consistent with the extensive research completed by authors Howe and Strauss in *Millennials Rising*. These two different groups of the MG are separated by age and education yet display many of the same values.

As a member of UCC Norwell, I have not observed the level of attendance at worship stated by MG2. Although I was in the room, there may well have been some subtle conversation and minor collaboration among members of the Senior High Youth Group during the process of completing the questionnaires.

## **The Theological Pursuit of Identity**

Howard Thurman in *A Strange Freedom* offers a strong argument that the real development of the individual comes from a sense of belonging to a community of persons who help reflect the individual's image. Thurman speaks of the ultimate spiritual development of the individual typically preceded by a personal awareness of self, and then God, allowing one to engage the community. Thurman focused on the inner life of the individual and defined the "inward center" of the individual "as the crucial arena where the issues would determine the destiny of people" (Thurman, 138).

The comfort of community is a strong component of the millennial generation's pursuit of personal meaning and sense of belonging. Thurman articulates this comfort when he says, "Always a way must be found for bringing into one's solitary place the settled look from another's face, for getting the quiet sanction of another's grace to undergird the meaning of self. To be ignored, to be passed over as of no account and no meaning is to be made into a faceless thing, not a person" (Thurman, vii).

The modern world will never know the real depth of the alienation of the Virginia Tech killer Keung-Hui Cho. By the grace of acceptance from a local community, could this disaster have been avoided? Could the same be said for Columbine in 1999 and for other dreadful events in our recent cultural past?

In their book *Daring to Speak God's Name: Ethical Prophecy in Ministry*, authors Mary Alice Mulligan and Rufus Burrows, Jr. assert that one major ingredient of the confusion and lack of groundedness in current culture is the pervasion of individualism in American Society (Mulligan and Burrows, 3). As personal identity moves further from being group- or community-focused to being self-focused, individual goals and achievements seem less fulfilling. Then, "the intrinsic value of other persons ceases to exist in such a culture. Individualism comes at the continuing expense of the traditional support structures" (Mulligan and Burrows, 7).

In her novel *The Bluest Eye* author Toni Morrison writes about isolation of individuals from one another within a family, the Breedloves:

Each member of the Breedlove family is his own cell of consciousness, each making his own patchwork quilt of reality---collecting fragments of experience here, pieces of information there. From the tiny impressions gleaned from one another, they created a sense of belonging and tried to make do with the way they found each other (Morrison, 34).

The Millennial Generation as reported and researched seems to be weaving itself a similar patchwork quilt, with individual experiences and nuances that construct the force of the generation's movement.

In his 2003 article "Who's filling Gen-Y's shoes?" Dr Pete Markiewicz provides the results of his research documenting the following points.

- According to Gallup polling "more than 90% of teens in the Millennial generation report being very close to their parents." In 1974, 40 % of baby boomers said they'd be better off without their parents.
- Today's kids are more apt to trust their parents (86%), teachers (86%), and the police (83%) than celebrities (35%) and athletes (30%).
- Teens now form the most religious age bracket in the U.S. Participation in church groups among teens rose from 17% to 28% between 1995 and 2001.

### **Conclusion: Faith in the Millennial Community**

There appears to be a change of heart about how to engage and retain Millennials who make their way to larger, more Boomer-oriented churches. While some churches are welcoming a large number of Millennials to worship, others have failed to attract the new population.

In an article entitled "Retro Worship" in the March/April 2001 issue of *Youth Worker Magazine*, veteran youth minister Jim Ramos discusses his turn away from youth worship models (prevalent in large churches) that often try to replicate youth media culture within the church. In the article Ramos comments, "we have created the anti-church" and goes on to outline how the low-tech "Holy Ground" youth services at his church are driven by need for worship intimacy rather than worship novelty among teens. This desire for intimacy is reflected in my survey sample of BU School of Theology students in the early 20s segment of the Millennial generation.

Though still emerging, the characteristics of worship native to the Millennial generation seem to include contemplation, silence, frequent communion, rituals, symbols, spiritual disciplines, mystery, diverse instrumentation (including stringed and wind instruments), and an eclectic mix of musical styles (from centuries-old hymnody to postmodern rock).

Howe and Strauss indicate they discovered that, “in 1990, there were virtually no prayer circles or clubs in U.S. high schools. Now, there are over 10,000 of them, full of devout kids” (Howe and Strauss, 234).

Further research indicates that when Millennials do go to church, they are responding to a change in attitude from the pulpit. They are more likely to engage a doctrine on how to actually live and behave, rather than a didactic declaration of what it is they are to believe.

It appears that the way of Millennials is to take the message and apply it in their own manner. The MG is inclined to form clubs, offering their faithfulness in a community setting, focusing their efforts on “team deed-doing ahead of solitary spirituality” (Howe and Strauss, 234).

My research on local Millennials agrees with the extensive research and findings from Howe and Strauss in *Millennials Rising*. A variety of student types and ages confirm their concrete connections to the most enticing aspects of our popular culture (such as fashion and technology) while establishing their individual identity within a significant community of “family, friends, and supportive community.”

While responses from the students from Boston University School of Theology could be called predictable, they are aligned with others of the Millennial Generation in their declarations about faith and community. The responses of the UCC Norwell Senior High Youth Group reveal an additional segment of the Millennial Generation that claims close connections to parents, their community of friends, and to themselves.

In a fitting tribute to the Boston University School of Theology and its development of “Boston Personalism,” the students surveyed seem to be near-perfect representations of the premise that the personality, and “person” of the students confirms the existence of the soul, and therefore the human presence of God in the individual.

The community is the foundation for the growth of the individual. A young person in an emerging community of devoted friends learns who he or she is in some level of safety. The Millennial Generation has established a high value on intimacy and community. As God is found in the individual, God is the steady force in the community of believers, family, and friends. Like rising water reaching a new level, God’s Presence envelops the Millennial Generation as they create their own world, with their own rules, for a future that looks promising.

**Exhibit I**

**Culture and Community Questionnaire: BUSTH Students (MG1)**

Do you have a:

- \_\_\_ Cell phone 12
- \_\_\_ IPOD 7
- \_\_\_ iTunes account 8
- \_\_\_ Laptop 12
- \_\_\_ Desktop computer 3
- \_\_\_ Blackberry 2
- \_\_\_ iTunes account
- \_\_\_ Car 5
- Other: PDA

Which of the following collaborative web resources do you use?

- \_\_\_ Classmates 4
- \_\_\_ Facebook 11
- \_\_\_ Friendster 1
- \_\_\_ LinkedIn
- \_\_\_ MySpace 2
- \_\_\_ Plaxo
- \_\_\_ Second Life
- \_\_\_ World of War Craft or other MMORPGs
- \_\_\_ Other collaborative Web resources 2
- Other: cyworld.com, Wikipedia, frat webboard

How often do you use the following?

	Very frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Blogs	3	1	5	3
RSS feeds, news alerts	1	1	3	7
Wikipedia	3	5	4	
Wikis			1	11
Text messaging	9	1	1	1
Chat rooms		2		10
Discussion boards	2	1	2	7
Handheld device to access e-mail		1	1	10
Handheld device to access Web sites		1	1	10
Yahoo groups or similar	2	1	2	6
Bookmarking tools (e.g. Del.icio.us)	1	2	2	7
Photo-sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, SnapFish, Pixamo, Shutterfly, etc.)	2	7	3	1
Skype	1			10
Instant messaging (e.g. AOLIM, Yahoo Messenger, Google Talk, MSN Web Messenger, etc.)	5	3	2	3



How often do you do the following?

	A lot	Sometimes	Never
Use your computer	12		
Surf the internet	10	2	
Listen to your IPOD	5	1	5
Instant message	3	4	5
Watch TV	2	7	3
Read non-school stuff	3	7	2
Study	9	4	
Hang out with friends	8	2	2
Spend time alone	4	7	1
Talk on the phone	3	8	1

Do you use any of the following brands/products?

- \_\_\_ Uggs
- \_\_\_ Prada 1
- \_\_\_ Abercrombie and Fitch
- \_\_\_ Aeropostale 2
- \_\_\_ North Face 4
- \_\_\_ Skechers
- \_\_\_ Boston University or other university-branded clothing or items 4
- \_\_\_ Gap 9
- \_\_\_ Urban Outfitters 3
- \_\_\_ Old Navy 6
- \_\_\_ Delia's 1
- \_\_\_ Hot Topic
- \_\_\_ Gadzooks
- \_\_\_ Wet Seal 2
- \_\_\_ Netflix 2
- Other: American Apparel

Rank the following types of community (with 1 being most important).

- \_\_\_ Family members 111211132151
- \_\_\_ Friends 222122211222
- \_\_\_ Classmates 5344555414
- \_\_\_ Church family 333533323643
- \_\_\_ Co-workers 635464536
- \_\_\_ Roommates 462164365
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a sense of belonging to your community?

\_\_\_ Yes 10

\_\_\_ No 1

\_\_\_ Undecided 1

Are you more likely to be an individualist\_\_\_? 7 Group member\_\_\_? 4

Rank the following types of community activities you participate in (with 1 being most important)

\_\_\_ Meals with others 321611111232

\_\_\_ TV/movie nights 82544834

\_\_\_ Drinking parties 93367456

\_\_\_ Binge drinking 10 9 10 10 9

\_\_\_ Study groups 7477458

\_\_\_ Worship/campus ministry 2125452323

\_\_\_ Sports 13 10 8522 10

\_\_\_ Hanging out 4122353111

\_\_\_ Discussion groups 5476647

\_\_\_ Car trips 6893675

Other\_\_\_\_\_

Rank the following benefits you get from your community (with 1 being most important).

\_\_\_ Casual conversation and fun 7455763313

\_\_\_ Friendship 23153162122

\_\_\_ People who hold me accountable 666457177

\_\_\_ Honesty when I need it 374745555

\_\_\_ Challenge and advice 1322342464

\_\_\_ Intimacy 42211311241

\_\_\_ Spirituality 5132762336

Other: Love; Acceptance as I am tied for 1;

How do you get your news?

\_\_\_ Newspaper 6

\_\_\_ Internet 11

\_\_\_ Television 4

Other: Radio

Do you watch any of the following on TV? Put a star by your favorite – or list favorite in “Other.”

- American Idol 1
  - 24 1
  - Grey’s Anatomy 6
  - Family Guy 1
  - Simpsons 1
  - The Apprentice 1
  - The Daily Show
  - The Colbert Report
  - MTV
  - VH1
  - Survivor
  - Amazing Race
  - Lost
  - ESPN
  - HBO 1
  - PBS 3
  - Nickelodeon 1
- Other: Project Runway; CSI

Do you vote?

- Yes 9
- No 3

Do you believe in God?

- Yes 11
- No
- Undecided 1

Are you a spiritual person?

- Yes 12
- No
- Unsure

Did you go to church as a kid?

- Every week 11
- Some weeks 1
- Never

Do you attend worship services now?

- Yes 11 1=sometimes
- No

If so, what denomination?

- Catholic 2
- Protestant 10
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Buddhism
- Other

In what format?

- At church 12
- On the internet

How often?1

- Every week 10
- Some weeks 2
- Never

Do you have any other spiritual practices? If so, describe.

Solitude; prayer 5; scripture; communication w/Christians; journaling 3; musical meditation 2; walking; running 2; quiet; Taize prayer; cooking and eating w/friends; laughing; writing; hiking; ministry jobs; yoga; reflection; reading; Tai Chi; walks on the beach; singing

Are you male 2 female 10

How old are you? 22 29 27 23 26 26 23 25 26 25 24 27

What grade/year are you in?

High School \_\_\_\_\_  
College \_\_\_\_\_

What university program are you in? MTS; Mdiv; Mdiv; Masters; Mdiv; Mdiv; Mdiv; Mdiv; Mdiv; MTS/MSW; Mdiv; Mdiv

### Analysis:

- Sample of 12 people (10 women and 2 men) ranging in age from 22 to 29, all of whom are working on masters' degrees at a school of theology.
- All have cell phones and laptops; more than half have iPods and iTunes accounts; half have cars. Only two have Blackberries and one has a PDA.
- Most have used collaborative web resources; 11 of 12 use Facebook.
- 9 of 12 use text messaging frequently, 8 of 12 uses Wikipedia sometimes or very frequently, 9 of 12 use photo-sharing web sites sometimes or very frequently. 11 of 12 never use Wikis, and 10 of 12 never use chatrooms, handheld devices to access e-mail/web, or Skype.
- All 12 use computers, all 12 surf the internet sometimes or a lot, all 12 study sometimes or a lot. 7 of 12 sometimes watch TV and read non-school stuff. Half never listen to iPods or instant message.
- Most popular brands are Gap (9 of 12 use), Old Navy, and North Face or BU or other university-branded clothing or items.
- 8 of 12 rank family as most important community. 9 of 12 rank friends as second most important. 8 of 12 rank church family as third most important. Co-workers are ranked least important community (out of the remaining categories of classmates, roommates, and co-workers).
- 10 of 12 have a sense of belonging to their community; 1 does not have a sense of belonging to a community, and 1 is undecided.
- "Individualists" outnumber "group members" 7 to 4.
- 9 of 12 rank meals with others as the most important or second most important type of community activity they participate in. Half rank hanging out as the most important or second most important type of community activity they participate in. Drinking parties and sports are least important.
- 8 of 12 rank intimacy as the most important or second most important benefit they get from their community. 7 of 12 rank friendship as the most important or second most important benefit they get from their community. Least important benefit is people who hold me accountable.
- 11 of 12 get their news from the internet, with newspaper next, followed by TV. Only one person gets news from the radio.
- Half watch Grey's Anatomy on TV, a quarter watch PBS. No one watches The Colbert Report or ESPN.
- 9 of 12 vote; 3 do not.
- 11 of 12 believe in God; 1 is undecided.
- All 12 say they are spiritual people.
- All but one went to church as a kid; everyone attends worship services now, 10 of 12 every week. No one "worships" on the internet.
- 10 Protestants, 2 Catholics.
- Of spiritual practices, prayer is mentioned by 5 of 12. The only other practices with more than one mention are journaling and running.

**Exhibit II**

**Culture and Community Questionnaire: Senior High Youth Group (MG2)**

Do you have a:

- Cell phone 13
- IPOD 14
- iTunes account 15
- Laptop 10
- Desktop computer 20
- Blackberry
- Car 9

Other: digital camera;

Which of the following collaborative web resources do you use?

- Classmates 2
- Facebook 16
- Friendster
- LinkedIn
- MySpace 11
- Plaxo
- Second Life
- World of War Craft or other MMORPGs 1
- Other collaborative Web resources

Other \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you use the following?

	Very frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Blogs	1	1	3	18
RSS feeds, news alerts	1	1	7	14
Wikipedia	4	12	7	2
Wikis	2	1	1	17
Text messaging	11	5	6	4
Chat rooms	1		6	17
Discussion boards	1	1	11	11
Handheld device to access e-mail		2	1	21
Handheld device to access Web sites		2	1	20
Yahoo groups or similar		4	4	16
Bookmarking tools (e.g. Del.icio.us)	1	3	4	16
Photo-sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, SnapFish, Pixamo, Shutterfly, etc.)	1	9	6	8
Skype		1		23
Instant messaging (e.g. AOLIM, Yahoo Messenger, Google Talk, MSN Web Messenger, etc.)	16	4	1	4

How often do you do the following?

	A lot	Sometimes	Never
Use your computer	22	4	
Surf the internet	18	7	
Listen to your IPOD	16	7	2
Instant message	16	5	4
Watch TV	11	12	13
Read non-school stuff	9	11	6
Study	10	12	3
Hang out with friends	22	4	
Spend time alone	7	14	2
Talk on the phone	5	19	1

Do you use any of the following brands/products?

- \_\_\_ Uggs 3
- \_\_\_ Prada 3
- \_\_\_ Abercrombie and Fitch 7
- \_\_\_ Aeropostale 10
- \_\_\_ North Face 5
- \_\_\_ Skechers 2
- \_\_\_ Boston University or other university-branded clothing or items 8
- \_\_\_ Gap 12
- \_\_\_ Urban Outfitters 5
- \_\_\_ Old Navy 13
- \_\_\_ Delia's 3
- \_\_\_ Hot Topic 5
- \_\_\_ Gadzooks
- \_\_\_ Wet Seal 4
- \_\_\_ Netflix 2

Other: American Eagle (3); Banana Republic; J Crew; Sports Apparel; Billabong; Quicksilver

Rank the following types of community (with 1 being most important).

- \_\_\_ Family members 11111111111111111112
- \_\_\_ Friends 23233223322212222222221
- \_\_\_ Classmates 454443564444143443564343
- \_\_\_ Church family 32322342233313433235535
- \_\_\_ Co-workers 56556534655526556656466
- \_\_\_ Roommates 6466164556662566543654

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a sense of belonging to your community?

\_\_\_ Yes 21

\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_ Undecided 4

Are you more likely to be an individualist\_\_\_? 14 Group member\_\_\_? 9

Rank the following types of community activities you participate in (with 1 being most important)

\_\_\_ Meals with others 4611741233424353154223

\_\_\_ TV/movie nights 2372332324352444513332

\_\_\_ Drinking parties 8 10 9939545599

\_\_\_ Binge drinking 99 10 10 10 10 4 8 10 6 10 10

\_\_\_ Study groups 4348877827199985

\_\_\_ Worship/campus ministry 5564564215565141 10 9 10 46

\_\_\_ Sports 321245151851311121172468

\_\_\_ Hanging out 11235124411213221121111

\_\_\_ Discussion groups 756678566171237877

\_\_\_ Car trips 10 8326365731616754

Other: games; skiing; service project

Rank the following benefits you get from your community (with 1 being most important).

\_\_\_ Casual conversation and fun 2426332113421311221323127

\_\_\_ Friendship 1312121221111123111111116

\_\_\_ People who hold me accountable 51756337756554375

\_\_\_ Honesty when I need it 6242544353145123654

\_\_\_ Challenge and advice 3654155623324145461

\_\_\_ Intimacy 5377762622431762532

\_\_\_ Spirituality 473164674555716773

Other\_\_\_\_\_

How do you get your news?

\_\_\_ Newspaper 12

\_\_\_ Internet 23

\_\_\_ Television 18

Other\_\_\_\_\_



Do you watch any of the following on TV? Put a star by your favorite – or list favorite in “Other.”

- American Idol 6
- 24 6
- Grey’s Anatomy 5
- Family Guy 14
- Simpsons 10
- The Apprentice 1
- The Daily Show 5
- The Colbert Report 4
- MTV 11
- VH1 6
- Survivor 2
- Amazing Race 2
- Lost 4
- ESPN 10
- HBO 4
- PBS 3
- Nickelodeon 6

Other: Ugly Betty; The Bachelor (2); Gilmore Girls; BBC; CNN; NESN; FSN; Desperate Housewives

Do you vote?

- Yes 4
- No 20

Do you believe in God?

- Yes 19
- No
- Undecided 5

Are you a spiritual person?

- Yes 25
- No 1
- Unsure 10

Did you go to church as a kid?

- Every week 7
- Some weeks 12
- Never 2

Do you attend worship services now?

- Yes 21
- No 3

If so, what denomination?

- Catholic 4
- Protestant 22
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Buddhism
- Other

In what format?

- At church 25
- On the internet

How often?

- Every week 8
- Some weeks 15
- Never

Do you have any other spiritual practices? If so, describe.  
Meditation; youth group (3); dinner prayer

Are you male 16 female 10

How old are you? 14 – 18

What grade/year are you in?

High School 9 – 12

College \_\_\_\_\_

What university program are you in? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Analysis:**

- Sample of 26 teenagers (10 girls and 16 boys) ranging in age from 14 to 18, grades 9 through 12 in high school.
- All but 6 have desktop computers; half or more have cell phones, Ipods, and iTunes accounts; 9 have cars.
- 16 of 26 use Facebook; 11 of 26 use MySpace; only one uses World of Warcraft.
- Instant messaging and text messaging are used most frequently; Wikipedia and photo-sharing services are used a lot; most never use handheld access to e-mail or websites, Skype, or blogs.
- 22 of 26 use computers a lot and hang out with friends a lot; more than half surf the internet, listen to Ipods, and instant message a lot; half never watch TV.
- Most popular brands are Old Navy, Gap, and Aeropostale (in that order).
- 25 of 25 rank family as the most important type of community; friends are second most important, followed by church family.
- 21 of 26 have a sense of belonging to their community; 4 are undecided.
- “Individualists” outnumber “group members” 14 to 9.
- Hanging out and sports are the first and second most important activities participated in as a community. Drinking parties and binge drinking were ranked as least important. 2 kids ranked worship as least important of ten choices.
- 21 of 26 ranked friendship as the most important or second most important benefit they get from their community. Least important benefit is people who hold me accountable.
- 23 of 25 get their news from the internet, with television next, followed by newspaper.
- More than half watch Family Guy; a little less than half watch Simpsons and ESPN.
- Only 4 of 26 vote (due to age).
- 19 of 26 believe in God; 5 are undecided.
- 25 of 26 say they are spiritual people.
- 19 of 26 went to church as kids every week or some weeks; 2 never went to church as kids.
- 21 of 26 attend worship services now – more some weeks than every week. No one “worships” on the internet.
- 22 Protestants, 4 Catholics.
- Only five mentions of spiritual practices, three of which are youth group.

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