

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

LATE 20TH CENTURY INNOVATIONS AND CHANGES: *TECHNOLOGY RULES; SOCIETY DROOLS*

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A story based on this release will appear in the Sunday December 12th Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll."

This is the first of six releases from a November survey looking at New Jersey at the brink of a new century. The next release on Dec 19 will look at "Past Developments in New Jersey: Successes and Failures." Releases between Christmas and New Years will look ahead to how New Jerseyans believe life will change in their state around key policy areas, for them personally, the use of technology in everyday life and the changing work environment.

Looking back over the past quarter century, New Jerseyans are clearly happy with where technological innovation has led them. They enthusiastically embrace computers, the Internet, television, cellular phones and even voice mail menus for businesses. State residents are less enamored with other, more human-led changes in society in the recent past. They bemoan a greater acceptance of divorce, HMOs and managed care, and recoil in horror as they look back on one of the great evils of the late 20th century—the widespread use of credit cards.

As we reach the year 2000, the Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers poll asked a statewide sample of 400 New Jerseyans to reflect back on 14 fairly recent changes in society, and judge whether each was a change for the better, a change for the worse or has not made much of a difference. Subtracting the percent saying "worse" from the percent saying "better" leads to a total Contribution Score for each change asked about.

"The invention of the computer" leads the list, with more describing this as a change for the better than worse by a lopsided margin of 86 to 9 percent for a total Contribution Score of +77. The rise of "women in the workplace" was second, with a +70 Contribution Score (78% for the better; 8% for the worse).

<i>HOW WE RATE</i>	<i>RECENT INNOVATIONS & CHANGES</i>
😊😊😊😊	The Invention of the Computer
😊😊😊😊	Women in the Workplace

😊😊😊	The Internet
😊😊😊	The Invention of Television
😊😊	Cellular phones
😊😊	Voice Mail Menus for Businesses
😊	The Growth of the Suburbs
😊	The Gay Rights Movement
😊	The Legalization of Abortion
😊	Rock & Roll
neither 😊 or 😞	The Increasing Power of the Religious Right
😞😞	More Acceptance of Divorce
😞😞😞	HMOs and Managed Care Plans
😞😞😞	The wide use of Credit Cards

Somewhat surprisingly, "the Internet," places third among the 14 changes asked about. Cliff Zukin, director of the poll remarked, "New Jerseyans' views of the Internet are remarkable for how many have a position on this relatively recent innovation, and for how positive those views are." Statewide, 82 percent already say the Internet has made a difference in society, with positive assessments far outnumbering negative for a total Contribution Score of +50. At this early stage of its development, "the Internet" rates even above "The Invention of Television," which garners a Contribution Score of +44.

Two other technological innovations followed in 5th and 6th place in the list of 14. "Cellular phones" receives a Contribution Score of +29 and "Voice Mail Menus for Businesses comes in at +22.

In contrast to New Jerseyans' love affair with technology, changes that have more to do with human-led changes in society are generally controversial, with large numbers feeling there have been changes for the worse. Three of the social changes asked about are generally regarded as having moved in a positive direction: "the growth of the suburbs" (+14), "the gay rights movement" (+12), and "the legalization of abortion" (+9). About one-quarter of Garden State residents describes each of these as a change for the worse. About the same number feel "the increasing power of the religious right" has been a change for the better as believe it has been a change for the worse.

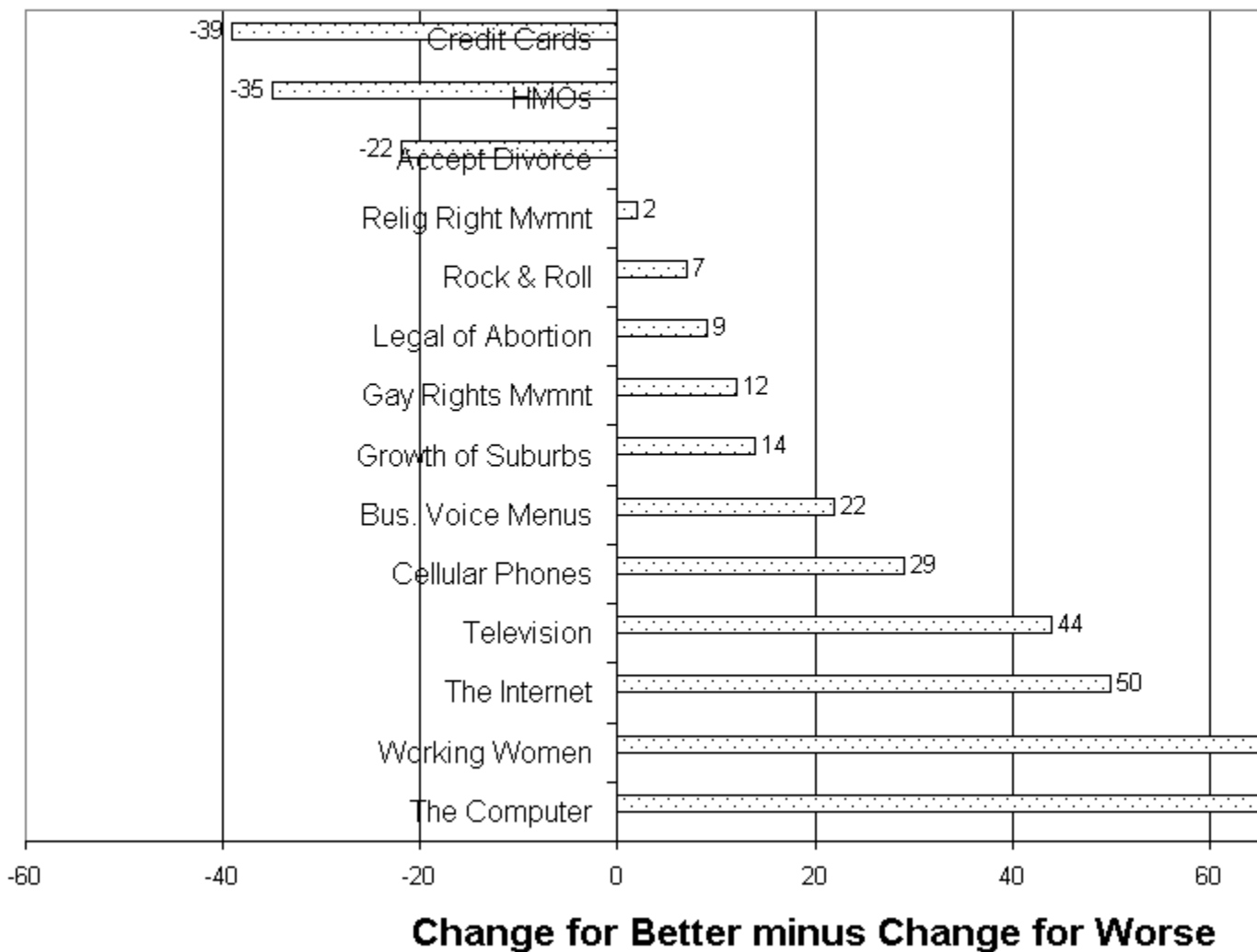
Three of the 14 changes asked about in the statewide survey are generally seen as having been harmful to society. Fully three-in-five describe "the widespread use of credit cards" as a change for the worse, while only one-in-five say it is a change for the better, yielding an overall Contribution Score of -39. Others on the negative side of the ledger include "HMOs and managed health care plans at -35, and "more acceptance of divorce" at -22.

In terms of overall *impact*—whether positive or negative—"the computer" easily tops the list. Better than nine-in-ten New Jerseyans acknowledge a primary impact of the

computer on the fabric of society. And, better than eight-in-ten see the following as having made a difference in society: cellular phones, credit cards, working women, television and the Internet. Slightly fewer, over 70 percent, feel that business voice mail menus, HMOs, and the greater acceptance of divorce have also made a significant difference in life in the late 20th century.

The latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted between November 16 and 24 with a statewide sample of 800 adult New Jersey residents. To prevent respondent fatigue, the 14 questions were split-sampled, so that seven questions each were asked of two sub-samples of 400 each. The sampling error for each of these sub-samples is ± 5 percent. The exact text of questions asked and distribution of responses is shown on the following page.

LATE 20TH CENTURY INNOVATIONS



As we approach the year 2000, I would like you to think about a number of changes in society in the recent past. I'm going to read a list of some things that have taken place. Please tell me if you think each one has been a change for the better, a change for the worse, or hasn't made much difference. (First,) Has **(RANDOMIZE ITEM)** been a change for the better, a change for the worse, or hasn't this made much difference? How about...

	Change for Better	Change for Worse	No Difference	Don't Know	Total (N)
HMOs and managed health care plans	21	56	15	7	99% (402)
The legalization of abortion	36	27	25	12	100% (402)
Women in the workplace	78	8	12	1	99% (402)
The wide use of credit cards	22	61	14	3	100% (402)
The growth of the suburbs	42	28	24	5	99% (402)
Rock and Roll	32	25	37	6	100% (402)
The Internet	66	16	8	11	101% (402)
The invention of the computer	86	9	3	2	100% (400)
The gay rights movement	35	23	27	15	100% (400)
Increasing power of the religious right	28	26	34	12	100% (400)
Cellular phones	59	30	8	2	99% (400)
Voice mail menus for businesses	51	29	12	9	101% (400)
The invention of TV	65	21	13	1	100% (400)
More acceptance of divorce	25	47	23	5	100% (400)