

The Star-Ledger/**Eagleton-Rutgers Poll**

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CONTACT: CLIFF ZUKIN OR
PATRICK MURRAY

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INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY PERVASIVE AND TROUBLING WEB USE PLATEAUS WITH STATUS GAP REMAINING

The Internet is a portal to discovery unbounded by geography and time. But for many New Jerseyans it is also an unwanted window to a seamy side of life. Better than 6 in 10 regular Internet users have encountered pornography while simply browsing the web; a similar number have received pornography from an unsolicited e-mail. And 70 percent of those having received such e-mails are bothered "a lot" by it.

Additionally, fully half of parents whose children have used the Internet in the last week describe themselves as "very" worried their children will see something pornographic on the Internet; another quarter are "somewhat" worried.

The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* poll has monitored New Jerseyans' Internet behaviors on a continual basis since early 1996. In February of that year, just one-quarter (26%) of state residents said they had ever gone on-line. The number of weekly Internet users reached the 50 percent level in September of 1999, and climbed to 61 percent in January of 2001. But there has been no significant growth over the last two years. The most recent poll, conducted in February of this year, finds 62 percent saying they go on

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Director: Cliff Zukin x247 • Associate Director: Patrick Murray x243

Graduate Research Assistants: Kelly Sand • Robert Suls

Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-1551

line from either home or work on a weekly basis. (Another nine percent say they use the Internet, but less frequently.) The survey, conducted by telephone with 802 adult residents, has a sampling error of ± 3.5 percentage points.

Tremendous social and economic status differences – or gaps – remain in who goes on line by education, income and age, with smaller differences by gender and race.

- Under half of those not having attended college (45%) report using the Internet weekly. This compares to two-thirds (68%) of those with some college background and to 87 percent of those having graduated college.
- Even fewer (39%) of those with annual household incomes of \$35,000 or less go on-line weekly. Twice as many (83%) of those who earn \$70,000 or more do so, as do 62 percent of those earning between \$35,000 and \$70,000.
- Just 22 percent of senior citizens age 65 and older use the Internet on a weekly basis, compared to 60 percent of those between 50 and 64, and 72 to 74 percent of New Jerseyans under 50.
- Women (56%) are less likely than men (68%) to report going on-line on a weekly basis. Blacks and Hispanics (56%) are slightly less likely than whites (63%) to have done so.

But the main import of the poll's findings according to director Cliff Zukin, "is the degree to which pornography on the Net has become not just available, but unavoidable. And disturbing. Putting together the percentages who: 1) use the Net regularly, 2) bump into pornography, and 3) are very bothered by it, totals to about 27 percent of all New Jersey adults, and that's a big number."

The Poll finds that 61 percent of those using the Internet from home on a weekly basis have encountered pornography by chance while browsing; 64 percent have received pornography in an unsolicited e-mail, with 42 percent of this group saying this happens to them weekly. In fact, most of this number (33 percent) report that it happens to them at least a few times a week.

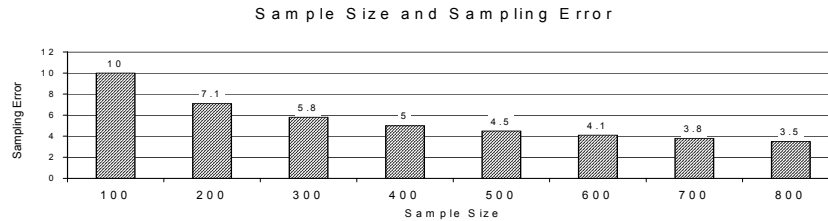
Among those who have received such e-mails--estimated to be 41 percent of *all* adults in the state--70 percent say this is something that bothers them "a lot," while another 18 percent are bothered at least "a little."

The Rutgers-based survey estimates that nearly one-fifth of all state residents (18%) have children who have used the Internet in the past week. Among this group of parents, half (51%) say they are “very worried” that their children will see something pornographic on-line, while another quarter (27%) are “somewhat worried.”

Among all state residents, there is little tolerance for people who use the Internet for pornographic purposes: 85 percent feel that public libraries should block adults from access to such sites; 84 percent believe it is “fair” to prosecute Internet users who try to meet an underage child for sex for child molestation in a “sting” operation, where the other user is actually an undercover police officer.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP142-7) February 23, 2003

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from January 30 to February 9 with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 New Jersey adults. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for 802 is ± 3.5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents were found to be less likely to agree with a statement, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.5 and 53.5 percent (50 ± 3.5) had all New Jersey residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Some of the results in this release are based on a subsample of 512 weekly home Internet users (± 4.3 percent sampling error) and a split-half sample of 401 adults (± 5 percent sampling error). Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for residents of North, Central and South Jersey, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.



Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“Do you ever use the Internet either from home or work. [IF “YES” ASK: Do you do this on at least a weekly basis or not]?” [JP8]

	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Less often</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February 2003 Adult Residents	62%	9%	29%	100%	(802)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
--September 2001 *	58	>>	42	<<	100 (895)
--April 2001 *	58	>>	42	<<	100 (802)
--January 2001 *	61	>>	39	<<	100 (803)
--March 2000 **	54	7	39	100	(800)
--September 1999 **	50	12	37	99	(802)
--June 1998 **	36	7	57	100	(602)
--October 1996 **	>>	40	<<	60	100 (810)
--February 1996 **	>>	26	<<	74	100 (804)

* “Do you use the Internet either from home or work on at least a weekly basis?”

** “Do you ever use a computer at work, school or home to connect with the Internet, or information services such as America Online? [1998-2000 PROBE]: Have you done this in the last 7 days, or not?”

WEEKLY INTERNET USE:

	<u>%</u>	<u>(n)</u>		<u>%</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Gender</u>			<u>Education</u>		
--Male	68	(388)	--High school or less	45	(194)
--Female	56	(414)	--Some college	68	(248)
			--College graduate	87	(360)
<u>Age</u>			<u>Income</u>		
--18 to 29	74	(105)	--Under \$35,000	39	(166)
--30 to 49	72	(358)	--\$35,000-69,999	62	(233)
--50 to 64	60	(202)	--\$70,000 or more	83	(323)
--65 and older	22	(115)			
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>			<u>Region</u>		
--White	63	(594)	--North	61	(366)
--Afr-Amer'n/Hispanic	56	(141)	--Central	68	(215)
			--South	58	(212)

[AMONG WEEKLY HOME INTERNET USERS:]

“Have you ever encountered pornography by chance when you were browsing the Internet?” [P1]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February 2003 Weekly Internet Users	61%	39%	100%	(512)
<i>Gender:</i>				
--Male	68	32	100	(275)
--Female	52	48	100	(237)
<i>Age:</i>				
--18 to 29	80	20	100	(73)
--30 to 49	66	34	100	(263)
--50 and older	38	62	100	(162)

[AMONG WEEKLY HOME INTERNET USERS:]

“Have you ever received pornography in an unsolicited email?” “How often does this happen -- a few times a week, once a week, once a month or less often?” [P2/2A]

	<u>Few times a week</u>	<u>Once a Week</u>	<u>Once a Month</u>	<u>Less Often</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February 2003 Weekly Internet Users	33%	9%	8%	14%	34%	2%	100%	(512)
<i>Gender:</i>								
--Male	30	9	12	14	33	2	100	(275)
--Female	37	9	4	13	35	1	99	(237)
<i>Age:</i>								
--18 to 29	40	12	14	17	14	3	100	(73)
--30 to 49	39	8	8	12	33	1	101	(263)
--50 and older	20	10	3	13	51	2	99	(162)

[ASKED OF THOSE WHO RECEIVE SUCH EMAILS:]

“Is this something that bothers you a lot, a little or not at all?” [P2B]

	<u>Lot</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February 2003 Received unsolicited porn	70%	18%	12%	100%	(331)
<i>Gender:</i>					
--Male	64	22	14	100	(179)
--Female	77	14	9	100	(152)

[AMONG PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN USED INTERNET IN PAST WEEK:]

“How worried are you that your children will see something pornographic on the Internet—very worried, somewhat worried, a little worried or not worried at all?” [P3]

	<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February 2003 Parents of Internet Users	51%	27%	10%	12%	100%	(176)

[ASKED OF HALF THE SAMPLE FEB. 5-9:]

“Now a question about ADULTS. Should ADULTS be able to access pornography websites at public libraries – or – should public libraries block access to pornography websites for ADULTS?” [P4]

	<u>Allow Access at Public Libraries</u>	<u>Libraries Should Block Access</u>	<u>Depends/ DK/Ref'd</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February 2003 Adult Residents	11%	85%	4%	100%	(401)
<i>Internet User</i>					
--Yes	12	83	5	100	(296)
--No	10	87	4	101	(105)

[ASKED OF HALF THE SAMPLE FEB. 5-9:]

“Suppose someone is caught using the Internet to meet an underage child for sex. If that child actually turns out to be an undercover adult police officer, is it fair to prosecute the Internet user for attempted child molestation, or not?” [P5]

	<u>Is Fair</u>	<u>Is Not Fair</u>	<u>Depends/ DK/Ref'd</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February 2003 Adult Residents	84%	11%	5%	100%	(401)
<i>Internet User</i>					
--Yes	86	12	2	100	(296)
--No	81	8	11	100	(105)