

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

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“*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*”

NEW JERSEY GENERATIONS Part 2: FAMILY AND LEISURE by Patrick Murray with Tara Cullen

This is the fourth of a special series of reports on *New Jersey Generations*, a joint project of the Eagleton Institute of Politics and Edward J. Bloustein School of Rutgers University, and the *Star-Ledger* of Newark. The series looks at generational differences in the political, social, and cultural life of the state. Stories will run in the paper and will be released on *The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* website concurrently. A chronology can be found on the background information page at the end of this report. The four generations we refer to are DotNets (18-27), GenerationX (28-39), Baby Boomers (40-58), and Matures (59+). Thumbnail sketches of each generation can also be found on the background information page as well.

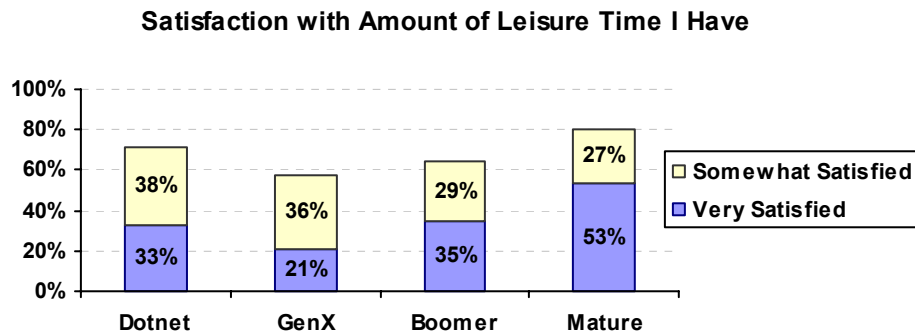
Middle Generations Stuck Between Wanting More Time and Needing More Money

Where do New Jersey adults stand on lifestyle choices? Do New Jerseyans want more money or time? Do we prefer to spend our free time with friends or family? A recent *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* of New Jersey’s generations found that many working New Jerseyans would like more time for leisure activities and that they get more satisfaction out of these interests. However, they don’t feel financially secure enough to hand in their notice just yet. The middle generations are the most likely to feel this conflict.

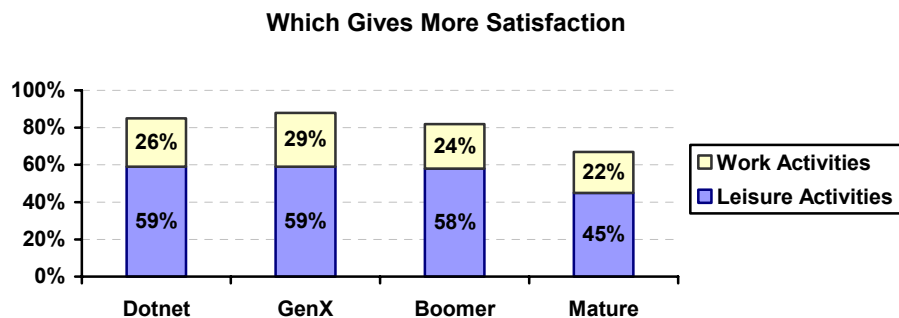
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Leisure Time Crunch

Overall, two-thirds of all New Jersey adults say they are satisfied with the amount of time available to them for pursuing leisure activities. This includes majorities of all four generations ranging from 57 percent of GenXers and 64 percent of Boomers and to 71 percent of Dotnets and 80 percent of Matures. However, only among Matures is there a majority (53%) who are “very” satisfied with the amount of leisure time they have. In contrast, only 1-in-5 GenXers (21%) say they are “very” satisfied with the time they have to pursue their aspirations. About one-third of Boomers (35%) and Dotnets (33%) say the same.



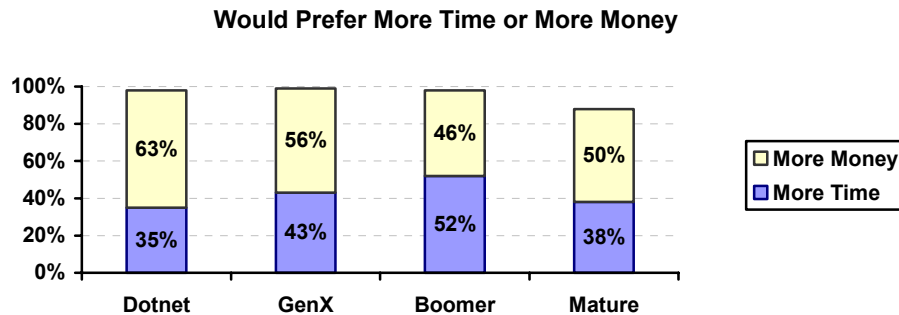
In terms of what types of activities give us the most personal satisfaction, leisure time leads work by a more than 2-to-1 margin among Garden State adults of all ages. Fifty-five percent of all generations say they get more personal satisfaction out of the things they do during their free time, compared to only 25 percent who say that what they do at work puts a smile on their face. Another 12 percent say both work and fun are equally satisfying.



“There is a real desire for more leisure time in New Jersey, especially within Generation X,” noted Patrick Murray, acting director of the poll. “However, this is tempered by the very real need for greater financial stability, particularly among those in the prime child-rearing

years.” The poll found that while few New Jerseyans (16%) say that they don’t have enough money to make ends meet, only 30 percent consider themselves to be financially comfortable.

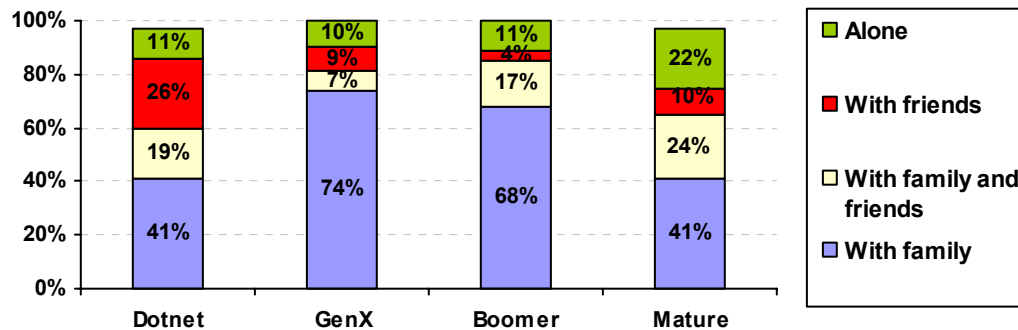
Given the squeeze between craving more leisure time and needing more money, it’s not surprising that New Jerseyans are split when asked to choose which they want more of. The percentage of adults who would prefer a greater cash flow exceeds those want more free time by a 52 to 44 percent margin.



While GenXers are the least satisfied with the amount of free time they have now, they clearly feel pressure to increase their earnings. Most GenXers would still want extra money (56%) over extra leisure time (43%) if given the choice. The young and energetic “do it all” Dotnets are most likely to prefer money (63%) over time (35%) at this point in their lives. Matures, 62 percent of whom are retired and 46 percent of whom are living on less than \$35,000 a year, are somewhat more likely to want a little extra cash (50%) over more free time (38%). Boomers are the only generation who apparently feel comfortable enough with their financial situation to want more time (52%) rather than more money (46%).

When New Jerseyans do have free time, they tend to devote it to family. The vast majority say they spend most of their free time with either family (59%) or a combination of friends and family (17%). Another 10 percent generally hang out with friends while 13 percent are usually alone during their free time. Boomers (85%) and GenXers (81%) are more likely than Matures (65%) and Dotnets (60%) to spend their free time surrounded by family members. Only 15 percent of Dotnets are married, compared to 62 percent of GenXers and 68 percent of Boomers. Just under half of Matures (45%) are currently married, although another 31 percent are widowed.

New Jerseyans Spend Most of Their Free Time



The survey results indicate that the middle generations are the most bound to family, with little time left for socializing with friends. Boomers (21%) are only somewhat more likely than GenXers (16%) to say they are able to get together with friends in their free time, and both generations are less likely to do so than either Dotnets or Matures. Nearly half of Dotnets spend their free time with friends (26%) or friends and family (19%). A relatively large number of Matures divide their time between friends and family (24%) or with friends (10%). On the other hand, Matures are twice as likely as other generations to say they generally spend their free time alone – 22 percent compared to 1-in-10 for the younger age cohorts.

TV Viewing Habits

What do these Matures do on their own? Probably watch TV according to the poll. Over 4-in-10 Matures (43%) spend more than four hours a day sitting in front of the television. This is greater than twice the percentage of Dotnets (21%), Boomers (19%) and GenXers (15%) who report the same level of TV viewing.

The types of programs different New Jerseyans favor also reveal a generational divide. For example, mature women lead the way in watching game shows, soaps and daytime talk programs. Nearly 1-in-4 (23%) names one of these types of shows as their favorite television program. Younger males, in the GenX (11%) and Dotnet (10%) generations are more likely than most to name sporting events or car shows as their preferred program.

Male Dotnets also lead the way in preferring situation comedies – 33 percent of this group name a comedy show as their favorite programs. For example, 9 percent of Dotnet men name “*The Simpsons*” as their favorite show on TV. While comedies are more popular with men in general, Dotnet women will be especially hard hit when “*Friends*” does not return to the

primetime lineup next year – 8 percent of these young women name this long-running sitcom as their favorite program.

Primetime dramas seem to draw a larger Baby Boomer audience – 33 percent pick this type of program as their favorite. For the youngest three generations, women are more likely than men to name a drama series as their favorite program. Only one drama series bucks the female preference trend. “*The Sopranos*” is most popular among GenX men – fully 1-in-10 males in this cohort name the New-Jersey-set mafia drama as their favorite.

How We Were Raised

The survey also asked residents to look back to the things they did with their own parents. The results reveal that times certainly have changed. Not surprisingly, those born prior to the end of World War II are less likely to have watched TV as a family than younger adults. However, the youngest generation of Dotnets reports that the tradition of the family dinner is going by the wayside.

Thinking back to when they were a child, most New Jersey adults say that they regularly joined their parents for dinner on weeknights (82%) and regularly helped with chores and errands (71%). Just under half say they regularly watched TV together (48%) or took a family vacation (42%). Only 24 percent say that going out to dinner or a movie as a family was a regular occurrence in their household.

Generationally, Matures are least likely to say that their family watched TV (34%), took a vacation (26%) or went to a restaurant or movie together (22%) when they were children. But once the postwar Baby Boom hit, these behaviors changed radically. Particularly, the advent of television has caused a major shift in family activities. About half of Boomers (52%), GenXers (55%) and Dotnets (49%) regularly watched TV with their parents, compared to only 36 percent of Matures.

Regular trips to a restaurant or movie theater as a family has been steadily increasing since the 1950s. Those reporting this as a regular activity in their families increased from 18 percent of Matures and 22 percent of Boomers to 29 percent of GenXers and 33 percent of Dotnets.

The family vacation took a jump during the Baby Boom era. While 37 percent of Matures say they regularly vacationed with their parents, this number jumps to 48 percent for Boomers. It then dips back down to 38 percent for GenXers and 40 percent for Dotnets.

“It’s interesting that the family vacation reached its zenith during the Baby Boom era,” remarked Murray. “Of course, the 1950s and early 60s saw an increase in expendable income and ads that encouraged the emerging middle class to ‘See the USA in Your Chevrolet.’ With the two-wage earners being the norm today, there may not be as much flexibility for carving out family vacation time”

There is one area in our daily lives where generational change has occurred only recently – that is the tradition of the family dinner. While more than 8-in-10 Matures (86%), Boomers (86%) and GenXers (82%) say their family regularly sat down to a weeknight meal together when they were kids, this number drops to 64 percent among Dotnets.

“The decrease in family mealtimes is a trend we may expect to grow as two-income families become the norm,” noted Murray. “Given these changes in traditional family rituals, it is not surprising that New Jerseyans are split on whether women in the work force has a negative impact on the family structure.”

While 51 percent of New Jersey adults disagree with the assertion that family life suffers when the woman has a full time job, 46 percent agree with it. Generationally, Matures are the only generation more likely to agree (55%) than disagree (41%) with this statement. Dotnets are the reverse – fully 64 percent disagree with this assertion compared to only 33 percent who agree that working women hurt family life. Boomers and GenXers are more likely to disagree than agree with this claim, but by slimmer margins – 50 percent disagree to 48 percent agree for Boomers and 55 percent disagree to 44 percent agree for GenX.

For most generations, there are no significant gender differences for those who feel that a woman working full time harms the family. Among Dotnets only 1-in-3 men (35%) and women (30%) agree. Among GenX, just under half of men (44%) and women (44%) alike agree. For Matures, its just over half of both men (52%) and women (57%) agree. Only among Baby Boomers – the generation that pioneered equal rights for women – is there any type of gender disparity. And surprisingly, it is female Boomers (54%) who are more likely than male Boomers (42%) to feel that the advent of the working woman has hurt the family.

Background Information on the *New Jersey Generations Study*

The Cast of Characters

Ours is a story of four New Jersey generations and their attitudes and behaviors across seven areas of political, social and economic life. Here are four primary actors – generations or age cohorts – in the drama.

- **Matures**, born before 1946, are about 1.6 million strong in the state today. Almost all were born before the explosion of the first nuclear weapon. Driven by duty and sculpted by sacrifice, this generation was forged by the experiences of the Depression and World War II, even though many experienced them indirectly through their parents while growing up. What is left in our definition of “Matures” is the last remnant of the WWII generation, along with the following cohort, often called the “Silent Generation,” who took their cues in working hard for a better life and upholding the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.
- **Baby Boomers**, born between 1946 and 1964 constitute the largest age cohort — about 2.3 million. This group was parented by prosperity, sharing a presumption of entitlement to their world view. Shaping political experiences were the Civil Rights movement, Viet Nam, and Watergate, not to mention rock music, drugs and the sexual revolution. The Boomer cohort has always been big enough to force the culture to adapt to them. For years they have dictated politics and culture by their sheer numbers in a market-driven economy, and policy to the degree they have had a coherent outlook.
- **Generation X**, or GenXers, born between 1964 and 1976 also number about 1.6 million. This group’s formative experiences were framed by familial and financial insecurity. They grew up amidst rising rates of divorce and recession. Where the sexual revolution of the Boomers brought free expression and experimentation, the threat of AIDS brought Xers fear and caution. During adolescence and early adulthood, their political world view was shaped by, well, pretty much nothing. The biggest external disruption was the Persian Gulf War, which ended quickly and without many American casualties, with computer-aimed smart bombs falling on targets like a video arcade game. Described as “slackers,” and scorned for a world view that begins and ends with themselves, even their moniker is about something that never happened.
- **DotNets**, are the new kids in town. Born after 1976, they are the 1 million young adults now between 18 and 27 years of age. They go by many labels — Millennials, Generation NeXt, Generation Y. We call them DotNets because we think one of their defining characteristics will be having come of age along with the Internet. Information has always been virtually costless and universally available to them; technology cheap and easily mastered; community as much a digital place of common interest as a shared physical space. As of now, we know little about DotNets, except that they don’t vote. This is our first look at this cohort in New Jersey.

The Study Design

The survey questionnaire was designed by students in Professor Cliff Zukin's graduate class in Survey Research offered at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy in the spring, 2004 semester. Zukin was, until recently, director of the Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll. He was assisted by Patrick Murray, now the Poll's Acting Director. Rob Suls served as the project manager. Other graduate students working on the project were: Lauren Arnold, Marci Berger, Mary Ellen Cook, Tara Cullen, Allison Kopicki, Nick Martyniak, Angie McGuire, Sharon Pinnelas, Regina Podhorn, Rochelle Rudnick and Elizabeth Williamson.

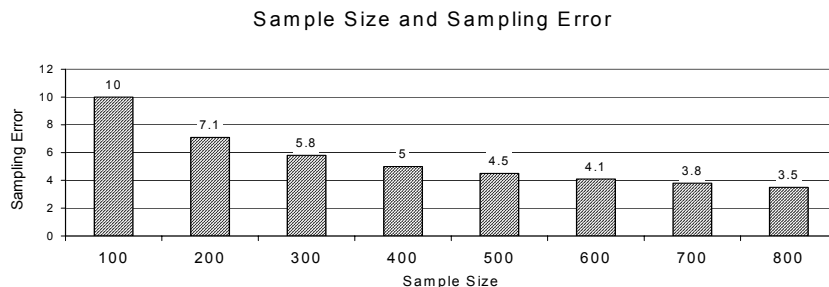
Six general topic areas were identified for study. All data will be released by Eagleton; most will also be the subject of stories in the Star-Ledger. Here is the schedule of releases and stories:

	<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Star-Ledger Story</i>	<i>Eagleton Release</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Politics and Government	Politically disconnected youth	Politically disconnected youth plus further partisan realignment	8/22
	Family & Leisure Time	The impact of "women's liberation"	Importance of family; how leisure time is spent	8/23
3	Money & Personal Finance	Materialistic youth	Money and employment concerns	8/24
4	Sex & Relationships	Children out of wedlock	Sexual practices, what's import in a relationship, what children should be taught; views of marriage	8/25
5	Religion & Spirituality	Ghosts, astrology and ESP	Variety of religious & para-normal beliefs and practices	8/26
6	Race & Immigration	<i>n/a</i>	Diversity & tolerance; views of societal change; race relations	8/27

The survey was conducted by telephone with a random sample of 819 New Jersey adults. The sample was stratified to include approximately equal numbers of residents (approximately 200 each) in each of four pre-defined generations, and the final results were weighted to represent the population as a whole. Interviewing took place between March 17 and 31, 2004. The sampling error associated with the generational sample sizes is ± 7 percentage points. Thus if we found that 50 percent of our *sample* of Baby Boomers agree with a particular statement, we would be pretty confident (95 percent sure) that the true value in the underlying *population* from which the sample was drawn is somewhere between 43 and 57 percent (50 ± 7).

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP146-2) August 23, 2004

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* was conducted by telephone from March 17 to March 31 with a scientifically selected random sample of 819 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 is ± 3.4 percent for the full sample 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 46.6 and 53.4 percent (50 ± 3.4) had all New Jersey residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for different generational groups, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The margin of error for any of the four generations is ± 7.1 percent. 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:

“Are you married, living as married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?”
[D7]

	<u>Married</u>	<u>Living as Married</u>	<u>Widowed</u>	<u>Divorced</u>	<u>Separated</u>	<u>Never Married</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	53%	1%	9%	10%	2%	23%	1%	99%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>									
--Dot-Net	15	5	--	3	2	73	2	100	(203)
--Gen X	62	1	--	6	2	27	1	99	(204)
--Boomer	68	1	4	12	4	11	1	101	(206)
--Mature	45	--	31	15	1	7	--	99	(206)

“Would you say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of time you have for doing things that you want to do? (PROBE: Are you very or somewhat satisfied/dissatisfied?)” [FL1]

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	36%	31%	24%	8%	1%	100%	(819)
<i>Generation</i>							
--Dot-Net	33	38	20	9	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	21	36	31	12	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	35	29	29	7	--	100	(206)
--Mature	53	27	12	5	3	100	(206)

“Generally speaking, do you spend most of your free time with your friends, with your family, or alone?”
[FL2]

	<u>Friends</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Alone</u>	<u>Friends/ Family Combo (VOL)</u>	<u>Other (VOL)</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	10%	59%	13%	17%	1%	--	100%	(819)
--All Adults								
<u>Generation</u>								
--Dot-Net	26	41	11	19	3	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	9	74	10	7	--	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	4	68	11	17	--	--	100	(206)
--Mature	10	41	22	24	2	1	100	(206)

“If you could choose between earning a little more money or having a little more leisure time, which would you choose?” [FL3]

	<u>More Money</u>	<u>More Time</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	52%	44%	4%	100%	(819)
--All Adults					
<u>Generation</u>					
--Dot-Net	63	35	3	101	(203)
--Gen X	56	43	--	99	(204)
--Boomer	46	52	2	100	(206)
--Mature	50	38	13	101	(206)

“Would you say you get more satisfaction from the things you do in your leisure time or the work you do?” [FL4]

	<u>Leisure Time</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Both (VOL)</u>	<u>Not Employed (VOL)</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	55%	25%	12%	6%	1%	99%	(819)
--All Adults							
<u>Generation</u>							
--Dot-Net	59	26	10	3	2	100	(203)
--Gen X	59	29	10	1	1	100	(204)
--Boomer	58	24	16	1	1	100	(206)
--Mature	45	22	12	19	2	100	(206)

“When you were a child, how often did you do the following things with your parents? [RANDOMIZE LIST] (A) Had dinner together on a weeknight; (B) watched TV together; (C) went out to dinner or a movie together; (D) took a vacation together; (E) helped each other with chores or errands.” [FL5]

	<u>Regularly</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Hardly Ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Dinner on a weeknight</u>	82%	11%	5%	2%	--	100%	(819)
<i><u>Generation</u></i>							
--Dot-Net	64	20	13	3	1	101	(203)
--Gen X	82	11	2	5	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	86	10	3	--	--	99	(206)
--Mature	86	6	5	2	--	99	(206)
<u>Watched TV</u>	48%	29%	11%	10%	1%	99%	(819)
<i><u>Generation</u></i>							
--Dot-Net	49	32	16	3	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	55	31	9	4	--	99	(204)
--Boomer	52	34	13	1	--	100	(206)
--Mature	36	20	8	34	2	100	(206)
<u>Went out to dinner/movie</u>	24%	37%	28%	11%	--	100%	(819)
<i><u>Generation</u></i>							
--Dot-Net	33	41	20	5	--	99	(203)
--Gen X	29	42	19	9	--	99	(204)
--Boomer	22	36	36	6	--	100	(206)
--Mature	18	29	30	22	1	100	(206)
<u>Took a vacation</u>	42%	25%	20%	13%	1%	101%	(819)
<i><u>Generation</u></i>							
--Dot-Net	40	32	21	7	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	38	33	18	11	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	48	22	21	8	1	100	(206)
--Mature	37	17	19	26	2	100	(206)
<u>Helped with chores/errands</u>	71%	21%	5%	2%	--	99%	(819)
<i><u>Generation</u></i>							
--Dot-Net	73	19	6	2	--	100	(203)
--Gen X	68	22	6	3	--	99	(204)
--Boomer	71	24	3	1	--	99	(206)
--Mature	74	18	5	2	1	100	(206)

“In an average day, how many hours do you spend watching television?” [FL6]

	<u>None</u>	<u>Less than 2 hours</u>	<u>Between 2 and 4 hours</u>	<u>Greater than 4 hours</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	2%	29%	43%	25%	1%	100%	(819)
--All Adults							
<u>Generation</u>							
--Dot-Net	3	39	36	21	--	99	(203)
--Gen X	4	34	47	15	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	2	33	45	19	--	99	(206)
--Mature	1	12	42	43	2	100	(206)

“What is the name of your favorite television show?” [FL7]

<u>Favorite TV Show</u>	<u>All Adults</u>	<u>DotNet</u>	<u>GenX</u>	<u>Boomer</u>	<u>Mature</u>
Daytime	8%	3%	3%	6%	17%
News	8	4	6	11	10
Sports	3	5	5	--	2
Cable-Specialty	4	3	3	6	5
Comedy	18	29	21	15	13
Drama	26	20	24	33	23
Reality	8	9	13	5	7
Other	6	5	7	5	4
Don't Know	17	19	13	17	18
Don't Watch TV	2	3	4	2	1
Total	100%	100	99	100	100
(n)	(819)	203	204	206	206

“I’m going to read you some statements to find out how you feel about various issues. For each one, please just tell me if you agree or disagree – all in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full time job.” [FL8A]

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2004	46%	51%	2%	99%	(819)
--All Adults					
<u>Generation</u>					
--Dot-Net	33	64	3	100	(203)
--Gen X	44	55	2	101	(204)
--Boomer	48	50	2	100	(206)
--Mature	55	41	4	100	(206)