



## **Internet Youth Chat Sessions Lead To Correspondence And In-Person Encounters – Ipsos-Reid Study**

**But global study of young Internet users shows most youth still cautious, others unsettled after chat room experiences**

**VANCOUVER, February 1, 2001** -- When it comes to connecting with people face-to-face, most youngsters around the world aren't leaping at just any chance to get together with someone they've met online or in a chat room, according to *The Face of the Web: Youth*, a 16-country study of young Internet users by the international market research firm Ipsos-Reid.

Observing or joining an online discussion is extremely popular among Internet users aged 12 to 24 – particularly among young girls – with chat room participation rates reaching 70 and 80 per cent levels in many countries. And in some countries – notably Mexico, followed by Germany, Canada and the U.S. -- close to half of chat room participants have, at one time or another, had an ongoing e-mail exchange with someone they met online.

But a majority of teens and young adults remain cautious about taking the next step: getting together with someone whom they first connected with online. Among youth who had observed or joined an online chat, further correspondence and meetings were more common in parts of Asia and Latin America - 37 per cent of South Koreans, 29 per cent of urban Mexicans and 28 per cent of urban Brazilians said they went on to meet an online acquaintance in person.

Europeans and North Americans were slightly more reserved than urban youth in the developing world. In Canada, an estimated 23 per cent of youth met their correspondents face-to-face, compared with 16 per cent in the U.S. In Europe, the corresponding numbers were France (23 per cent), Germany (18 per cent), the United Kingdom (15 per cent), and the Netherlands (14 per cent).

“The new generation of online users accepts chat rooms as another way of connecting with people, but online chat and face-to-face meetings are still at opposite ends of the continuum,” noted Gus Schattenberg, vice-president of Global Research for Ipsos-Reid. “The majority of young people haven't raced out to get together with people they've discovered online; they are much more likely to report corresponding regularly via e-mail than having a face-to-face meeting – which certainly makes sense from the standpoint of their personal safety.”

Unsettling experiences online are no doubt a contributing factor, said Schattenberg. Girls and young women are more than twice as likely as males to have had negative experiences using chat rooms.

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Up to one-quarter of female chat room participants say that they have felt uneasy or frightened about things that occurred during chat sessions, including receiving unwanted comments of a sexual nature or repeated requests for further contact. ( [Related Press Release](#)).

E-mail remains the most important social aspect of youth Internet use around the world. On average, nine-in-ten young Internet users have tried e-mail, compared to seven-in-ten for chat rooms, and four-in-ten for online video games.

**Methodology** The Face of the Web: Youth is a two-phase survey conducted last year with over 10,000 youths between the ages of 12 and 24 in 16 countries. Half of the interviews were conducted with a representative sample of the youth populations in each country to track current Internet awareness, usage, and intentions to go online. The remainder of the interviews focussed on young Internet users in each country to investigate their Internet usage patterns and experience with Internet music, chat, and retail services.

National samples each consisted of 300 12-24-year-olds, except in the U.S., where 600 interviews were conducted. Results outside the U.S. are accurate within an error margin of no more than plus/minus 6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20; in the U.S., the results are accurate within an error margin of no more than plus/minus 4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

#### **About Ipsos-Reid**

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