

THE NEW PUBLIC SQUARE

Digital habits of today's high school students

Today's high school students can build social and cultural capital in ways hard to imagine only a generation ago. They can compete internationally, organize protests, or follow trends globally without leaving home -- *if* they have broadband. How do high school students participate in the new public square?



Path to Global Awareness: The Internet

The Internet is the primary source of news for a majority of students. However, for a sizeable minority it is far more than a delivery system. Almost 4 in 10 students credit the Internet with raising their awareness of global issues. Asian-American students are most likely, and students who prefer not to disclose their race/ethnicity least likely, to get most of their news from the Internet *and* to feel the Internet has boosted their global awareness.

Local/ Global Awareness

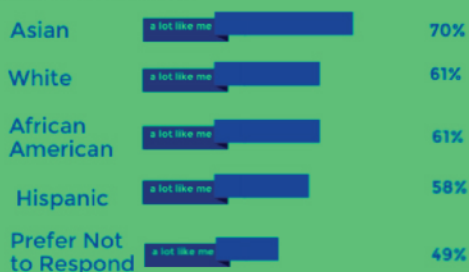
I get most of my news from the Internet

a lot like me 60%

I am more aware of global issues through using the internet

a lot like me 38%

Student Racial/ Ethnic Background & Get Most of My News from Internet



Student Racial/ Ethnic Background & More Aware of Global Issues through Using Internet



Key to the "Gated" Public Square: Home Access

Most students have the key to the new public square: home access to the Internet sounds "A lot like" them. But 1 in 7 appear to be on the outside. While those on the outside come from all racial/ethnic groups, Hispanics and African Americans are less likely to have access to the new public square. Students who prefer not to disclose their race/ ethnicity appear least likely to have home access to the Internet

Access: Common But Not Universal

I have access to the Internet at home

a lot like me 86%

Student Racial/ Ethnic Background & Access to the Internet at Home



Civic Engagement and the New Public Square?

Young people historically have had low voter turnout. While voting is important, it is only one type of civic engagement. Our national sample of high school students shows only a small minority report advocating for change online, and fewer engage as controversy increases. Racial/ethnic differences are small (not shown).

Political Activism in the New Public Square

I use the Internet to advocate for change

a lot like me 24%

I can effectively engage online in political issues

a lot like me 19%

I regularly post thoughts related to social issues online

a lot like me 11%