

# How young Canadians and Americans are different

The Toronto Star  
Lesley Ciarula Taylor Staff Reporter  
Sat Oct 17 2009

Young Canadians are dramatically different from young Americans, a new cross-border survey has found.

Canadians between 18 and 34 travel more, recycle more, play the lottery more, are less likely to marry, text-message less and are more likely to rent their homes than their American counterparts, the Ipsos Reid study revealed.

"Americans come through as a little more grounded, more domestic. Canadians are more of the free-spirit type," Samantha McAra, a 26-year-old senior research manager in Calgary with the polling company, said Friday.

"My friends and I, we're renting, not married, have careers, like to travel. The environment thing, too. If someone doesn't recycle, it's sort of like you look at that person and they're sort of judged."

McAra wrote the questions for the survey, which asked 1,000 people on each side of the border to respond online. The traditional telephone poll wouldn't work for a demographic in which 34 per cent of Americans and 19 per cent of Canadians only have a cellphone, she said.

McAra may be smack in the middle of the "emerging market group," as she calls it, but even she was baffled by some of the 10 social networking groups on the final list, sites such as imeem.com and ning.com. But even they had six and three people registered, respectively, among those polled.

Facebook is the social networking site of choice for Canadians, at 81 per cent registered, compared to 57 per cent for Americans. In the U.S., 54 per cent are signed onto MySpace, compared with 23 per cent of young Canadians.

Companies are increasingly interested in the 18-to-34-year-olds, McAra said, because they have healthy incomes and the urge to acquire; baby boomers, on the other hand, have the incomes but not as strong a need to spend.

Among the findings in the 18-to-34 group:

—Canadians sent an average 78.7 text messages a week; Americans send 129.6.

—73 per cent of Canadians rated the environment as important compared to 61 per cent of Americans.

—88 per cent of Canadians actively recycle compared to 72 per cent of Americans.

—44 per cent of Canadians rated terrorism as important compared to 65 per cent of Americans.

—25 per cent of Canadians are married and 18 per cent are living together, compared to 39 per cent of Americans married and 7 per cent living together.

—35 per cent of Canadians own their own home compared with 45 per cent of Americans

—48 per cent of Canadians vacationed outside of Canada; 19 per cent of Americans vacationed out of the U.S.

—44 per cent of Canadians and 37 per cent of Americans pay most often with debit cards.

—80 per cent of Canadians have played the lottery in the past year compared with 63 per cent of Americans.