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The Kids Are Alright, But The World Isn't

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[Here](#) is a survey conducted by Peter Hart Associates for the Horatio Alger Association with some interesting findings. (A pdf of the entire report, 80 pages, can be downloaded at the bottom of the page.) Horatio Alger commissions this "State of Our Nation's Youth" study regularly, and while the survey isn't nearly large as others such as the High School Survey of Student Engagement, it offers patterns of student habits and attitudes.

The general point Hart summarizes is that teenagers worry about the political and economic future, and they suffer the pressure of grades and performance acutely. "Yet despite these anxieties," reads the overview, "what emerges here is a portrait of a generation who believe in themselves and their abilities." The state of the world doesn't make a dent in their self-image, apparently.

Other findings:

- When asked how their schools could improve the education they receive, the biggest response was by improving in-school technology.

- In 2001, 61 percent of students reported getting mostly B's or better. In 2004 the number jumped to 70 percent, while this year it fell a bit to 67 percent.

- One in five students spends more than 10 hours per week on homework.

- Only 12 percent of students say they follow this year's political campaign closely. 22 percent say they don't care who wins the presidency, and 39 percent believe there is no difference between the candidates.

- Media use is heavy: 9.8 hours a week of television, 12.9 hours per week on the cell phone, and 11.6 hours per week on the Internet. (Elsewhere, the report charts Internet play time at 13.3 hours.)

- "A" and "B" students spend 2.4 hours less time per week online than "C" and lower students.

- Overall, students spend 6.2 hours of online time browsing social networking sites. "A" students spend only 3.5 hours.

——46 percent of high school students use Facebook. The most popular activity is keeping in touch with friends (79 percent). The least popular activity is to find help for homework (6 percent).