

Key Findings

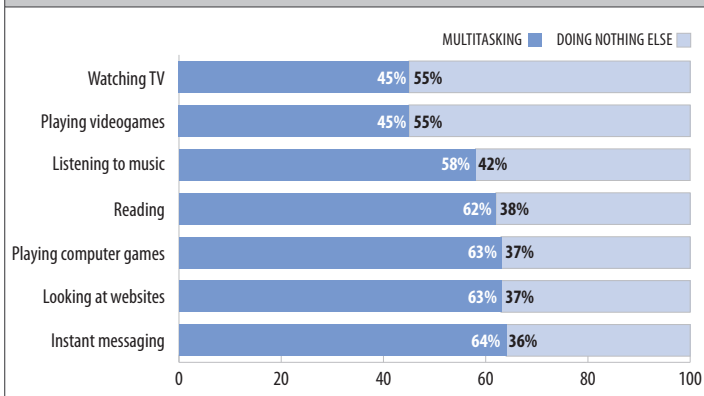
MEDIA MULTITASKING AMONG AMERICAN YOUTH: PREVALENCE, PREDICTORS AND PAIRINGS

OVERALL MULTITASKING

- **When they are a young person's primary activity, TV and videogames are the *least* multitasked media, while reading and computer activities such as instant messaging, computer games and looking at websites are the *most* multitasked.** Nearly two-thirds of the time young people spend reading, playing computer games or looking at websites, they are also doing something else at the same time ("overall" multitasking — primarily eating, doing chores, talking on the phone, doing homework, or using another media). But the same is true less than half the time they're watching TV (45%) or playing videogames (45%).

Indeed, young people are more likely to focus their attention exclusively on TV than on reading: 55% of the time they're watching TV as their primary activity, they're doing nothing else; compared to only 38% of the time they're reading as their primary activity.

PERCENT OF TIME YOUNG PEOPLE SPEND MULTITASKING WHEN THEIR PRIMARY ACTIVITY IS:

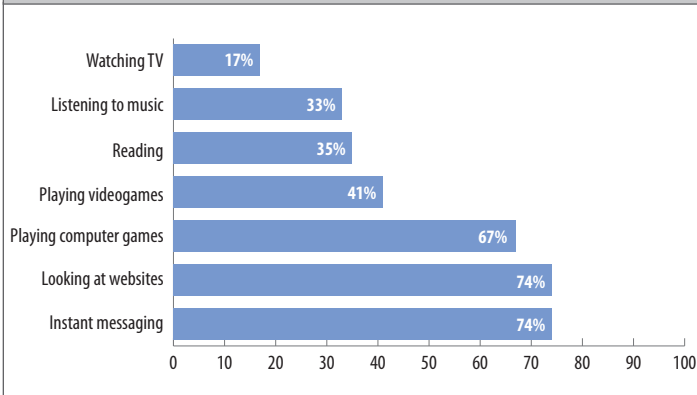


NOTE: The multitasking proportions in this chart are based on the proportion of time, for each primary medium, that a child did not indicate that their secondary activity was "nothing else."

MEDIA MULTITASKING

- **Most young people media multitask at least some of the time, but some don't do so at all.** In a typical week, eight in ten (81%) young people spend some of their media time using more than one medium at a time ("media multitasking"), such as reading a magazine while watching TV, listening to music while playing a videogame, and so on. On the other hand, nearly one in five (19%) young people don't media multitask at all over the course of a typical week. Those young people who do media multitask spend an average of 26% of their media time using more than one medium at a time.
- **Young people are most likely to use multiple media together when they're instant messaging (74%), surfing the Internet (74%) or playing computer games (67%); they're least likely to do so when watching TV (17% of the time).** Data from the larger, nationally representative *Generation M* survey bolster this finding that TV is the least multitasked medium. When respondents were asked how often they used another medium while watching TV, using the computer, reading or playing videogames, 24% said they did so "most of the time" while watching TV, compared to 33% who said the same about music or using the computer.

OF TOTAL TIME SPENT DOING EACH ACTIVITY, PERCENT THAT WAS SPENT USING ANOTHER MEDIUM AT THE SAME TIME:



NOTE: This chart shows the proportion of time spent "media multitasking" each medium with any other medium, regardless of which activity was primary and which was secondary. Because diary respondents could mark multiple secondary activities, this proportion is inflated by those instances when multiple secondary media activities were indicated.

METHODOLOGY: Unless otherwise noted, all findings presented here are from the December 2006 Kaiser Family Foundation report *Media Multitasking Among American Youth: Prevalence, Predictors and Pairings* by Ulla G. Foehr. The findings are based on data from seven-day media use diaries collected from a self-selected subsample of 694 of the 2,032 8- to 18-year-old participants in the Foundation's nationally representative survey *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-Olds*, published in March 2005; and on a new regression analysis of multitasking-related findings among the 1,205 7th–12th grade participants in the national survey. The data were collected from October 2003 through March 2004. In the media diaries, respondents listed every time they used media for at least 15 minutes. They then specified their *primary* media activity, as well as any *secondary* activity they may have been engaged in, such as using another media (*media* multitasking), or doing chores, eating, doing homework, or talking on the phone (*overall* multitasking). Additional details on the methodology can be found in the full report.

MEDIA MULTITASKING (continued)

- **Girls are more likely to media multitask than boys.** A regression analysis of survey data from the Foundation's *Generation M* study allows us to predict young people's media multitasking behaviors based on other factors such as demographic characteristics and personality traits (among 7th–12th graders). This analysis indicates that even when controlling for other variables, a young person's race, their age, their parents' education, and their community income are not significant predictors of how likely they are to multitask their media; but gender is (girls are more likely than boys to use more than one medium at a time).

Not surprisingly, other factors related to having the "opportunity" to media multitask were also relevant, such as having a computer at home, having a computer within eyesight of the TV, and living in a highly TV-oriented home (a home where there are no rules about TV, the TV is usually on during meals, and the television is left on most of the time whether anyone is watching or not).

The regression analysis also indicates that adolescents who rank higher on a "sensation-seeking" scale (e.g., those who are more prone to adventure and exciting experiences) are more likely to media multitask than others.

- **Young people who are "heavy" media multitaskers consume nearly twice as much media as those who are "light" multitaskers.** According to the *Generation M* study, about 15% of 7th–12th graders say they use another medium "most of the time" they're using at least three out of the four media in the study (TV, reading, videogames, and computers). These are considered "heavy" media multitaskers. Another 15% are classified as "light" media multitaskers — they generally use more than one medium at a time either "none of the time" or "only a little" of the time. Adolescents who are "light" media multitaskers are exposed to 6:38 of media a day, while those who are "heavy" multitaskers are exposed to 12:49 of media a day.

HOMEWORK

- **Many teens use media while doing their homework, especially if they're doing homework on the computer.** According to the *Generation M* report, 30% of 8- to 18-year-olds use media or talk on the phone "most of the time" they're doing homework, while another 31% say they do so "some" of the time.

The new analysis of media diary data from that study looks more closely at what happens when young people do homework on the computer. When doing homework on the computer is their primary activity, they're usually doing something else at the same time (65% of the time).

In fact, half (50%) of all the time spent doing homework on the computer as their primary activity is also spent using another media, such as listening to music, instant messaging, or watching TV.

WHEN A YOUNG PERSON'S PRIMARY ACTIVITY IS DOING HOMEWORK ON THE COMPUTER, THE PROPORTION OF TIME THEY ARE DOING EACH OTHER ACTIVITY AT THE SAME TIME:

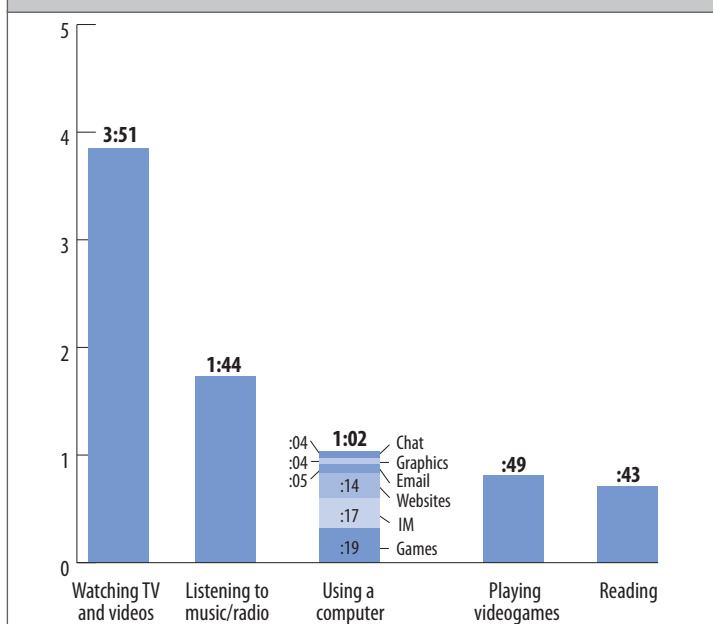
Listening to music	11%
Instant messaging	7
Watching TV	7
Looking at websites	6
Reading	6
Email	5
Other computer activities	4
Playing computer games	3
Playing videogames	2

Note: Because diary respondents could list multiple secondary activities, the sum of media multitasking is inflated by those instances when multiple secondary media activities were indicated.

BACKGROUND — TIME SPENT WITH EACH MEDIUM

When considering young people's multitasking patterns, it's useful to keep in mind the total amount of time spent with each medium. Data from the Foundation's 2005 *Generation M* study help offer that perspective, as reflected in the chart below.

IN A TYPICAL DAY, AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT WITH EACH MEDIUM, AMONG ALL 8- TO 18-YEAR-OLDS:



Source: *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-Olds*, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005. Note: Time spent using a computer and reading are for entertainment only, not homework.