



A THIN LINE



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## MTV, ASSOCIATED PRESS-NORC CENTER SURVEY FINDS THAT ONLINE BULLYING HAS DECLINED, YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MAKING BETTER DIGITAL DECISIONS, AND MORE ARE SEEKING HELP FROM FAMILY

*Report Shows Downward Trend Across 26 of 27 Forms of Digital Abuse, Incidence of Sexting Drops Nearly 20%, Less Than Half of Young People Report Experiencing Digital Abuse*

**New York, NY – October 24, 2013** – [MTV](#) and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research today released the results of a new survey exploring the pervasiveness of digital abuse among teens and young adults, how it is affecting America's youth and how they're responding to it. According to the survey, trends show that the share of young people affected by digital abuse has declined since 2011, with less than half (49 percent) of those surveyed stating that they have experienced digital abuse, compared to 56 percent in 2011. Additionally, virtually every form of digital abuse tracked in this study – 26 out of 27 listed – has declined\*. When experiencing digital abuse, 44 percent of young people state that they seek help from their parents or family, up over 25 percent from 2011, and the majority (66 percent) say that telling their parents made the situation better.

Sexting is down nearly 20 percent from 2011, with only about a quarter of young people reporting that they have sent or received "sext" messages, compared with one in three in 2011. Meanwhile, just over 10 percent of 14-24 year olds say they have shared naked pictures or videos of themselves. While this number remains relatively consistent over the past few years, the percentage of teens and young adults who say they sent naked pictures to someone they only know online has decreased by more than half since 2009. Additionally, young people report less pressure to send naked pictures or videos of themselves, down over 40 percent compared to 2011 (12 percent vs. 7 percent). Unfortunately there has been less progress on digital dating abuse. On par with 2011, nearly 40 percent of young people in a relationship report experiencing some type of digital dating abuse, with one in five stating that their partner has checked up with them multiple times per day online or via mobile, and that their significant other has read their text messages without their permission.

The MTV and Associated Press-NORC Center study was released today as part of MTV's "[A THIN LINE](#)" campaign, which has already empowered more than 1.5 million young people to take action to stop the spread of digital abuse.

Detailed findings from the October 2013 study include:

### **I. POSITIVE MOMENTUM AND RESPONSE**

Less than half of young people (49 percent) report experiencing digital abuse, representing a nearly 15 percent decline from 56 percent in 2011. Some of the positive gains include:

- Drops in 26 of 27 forms of digital abuse (2013 vs. 2011)\*. Some of these include:
  - A nearly 30 percent drop in reports of people using email, IM or cell phone text messages to spread rumors that weren't true (15 percent vs. 21 percent)
  - An almost 30 percent decline in reports of people impersonating the respondent by logging into his or her email or social media accounts without permission (15 percent vs. 21 percent)
  - A nearly 25 percent decrease in reports of spying by logging into personal email and/or social media accounts without permission (16 percent vs. 21 percent)

When responding to digital abuse:

- More young people are seeking help from parents or family, up over 25 percent from 2011. Among the 1 in 3 who asked their parents for help in 2013, a majority (66 percent) say it made the situation better, up 35 percent compared to 2011 (49 percent). Additionally, nearly 20 percent asked a sibling for help, and among that group-over half (57 percent) report that it made the situation better.
- The most effective responses to digital abuse include:
  - Changing email, IM, or social networking passwords (nearly three-quarters, or 73 percent, report that this made the situation better)
  - Changing an email address, screen name or cell phone number (72 percent report this made the situation better)
  - Deleting a social networking profile (72 percent report this made the situation better)
  - Telling parents (66 percent report this made the situation better).
- Retaliation is now cited as the least effective response, with 20 percent saying that it made the situation worse. Nearly 50 percent viewed retaliation as an effective response in 2011, compared to less than 30 percent in 2013, representing a nearly 40 percent decline.

## **II. SEXTING AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The number of young people who have sent or received "sext" messages has declined. Of the young people who have shared naked pictures or videos of themselves, over half (66 percent) say they sent naked pictures of themselves to their boyfriend or girlfriend, and less than 15 percent have shared naked pictures with someone they only know online, marking a more than 50 percent decline since 2009.

While fewer young people report sending or receiving "sext" messages, digital dating abuse has unfortunately remained relatively consistent, with nearly 40 percent of young people who are currently in a relationship experiencing some form of digital abuse:

- Around one in five report that their partner has checked up with them multiple times per day online or via mobile (22 percent), and that their significant other has read their text messages without their permission (21 percent).
- Nearly 10 percent say their significant other has called them names, put them down, or said mean things to them on the Internet or on their cell phone (9 percent) or demanded to know the passwords to their email and Internet accounts (8 percent).
- Nearly 20 percent of young people say they feel pressured by their partner to respond to their phone calls, emails, texts, or instant messages.

To access the full MTV/AP-NORC research findings from 2013, 2011 and 2009, please go to [www.research.ATHINLINE.org](http://www.research.ATHINLINE.org). Additional information, including the Associated Press stories based on the survey results and the survey's complete topline findings can be found on The AP-NORC Center's website at [www.apnorc.org](http://www.apnorc.org).

Launched in 2009, MTV's "A THIN LINE" campaign empowers America's youth to identify, respond to, and stop the spread of digital abuse, which includes all forms of digital bullying, dating abuse and discrimination. MTV is addressing these issues through thought-provoking PSAs, integration into MTV's top-rated shows, innovative online and mobile tools, and curricula. For more information on MTV's "A THIN LINE" please head to [www.ATHINLINE.org](http://www.ATHINLINE.org).

### *Methodology*

This survey was conducted by the GfK Group using the Web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the Web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, GfK provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.

Interviews were conducted in English between September 27 and October 7, 2013 with 1,297 young people ages 14-24 (489 ages 14-17; 808 ages 18-24). A total of 4,321 panel members were randomly drawn from GfK's KnowledgePanel®.

1,297 (excluding breakoffs) responded to the invitation, yielding a final stage completion rate of 30.0 percent. The recruitment rate for this study, reported by GfK, was 13.2 percent and the profile rate was 66.7 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 2.6 percent. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data are collected and made final, a post-stratification process is used to adjust for any survey non-response as well as any non-coverage or under- and oversampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. Post stratification variables included, age, sex, education, race, and metropolitan status using the August 2013 Current Population Survey (CPS). The weighted data, which thus reflect the U.S. population of 14-24 year olds, were used for all analyses.

Once GfK collected the data, the AP-NORC Center conducted the analysis along with MTV's Insights and Innovation department. All analyses were conducted using STATA (version 13), which allows for adjustment of standard errors for complex sample designs. All differences reported between subgroups of the U.S. population are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or less) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling. A comprehensive listing of all study questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research website: [www.apnorc.org](http://www.apnorc.org).

The study design was a collaborative effort between MTV and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Funding for the study was provided by MTV.

\*Data reveals a downward trend, however not all of the changes are statistically significant.

#### **About NORC at the University of Chicago**

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research organization headquartered in downtown Chicago with additional offices in the University of Chicago campus, the D.C. Metro area, Atlanta, Boston, and San Francisco. NORC also supports a nationwide field staff as well as international research operations. With clients throughout the world, NORC collaborates with government agencies, foundations, education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to provide data and analysis that support informed decision making in key areas including health, education, crime, justice, energy, security and the environment. NORC's more than 70 years of leadership and experience in data collection, analysis, and dissemination—coupled with deep subject matter expertise—provides the foundation for effective solutions to issues confronting society.

#### **About The Associated Press**

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#### **About MTV**

MTV is the world's premier youth entertainment brand. With a global reach of more than a half-billion households, MTV is the cultural home of the millennial generation, music fans and artists, and a pioneer in creating innovative programming for young people. MTV reflects and creates pop culture with its Emmy®, Grammy® and Peabody® award-winning content built around compelling storytelling, music discovery and activism across TV, online and mobile. MTV's sibling networks MTV2 and mtvU each deliver unparalleled customized content for young males, music fans and college students, and its online hub MTV.com is the leading destination for music, news and pop culture. MTV is part of MTV Networks, a unit of Viacom (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), one of the world's leading creators of programming and content across all media platforms. For more information, go to [www.mtvpress.com](http://www.mtvpress.com).

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