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Teens and the Media: Television is Dead and Facebook is Irresistible



YORK, Pa., May 13, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The "media" is an undeniably powerful entity in our daily lives. It's even more invasive for teens and college students, a generation growing up with more forms of media choices than any other generation before them.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20100929/DC73342LOGO>)

StageofLife.com, a blogging resource for high school students, Baby Boomers, and every life stage in between, wanted to know how teens felt about the media, so they asked its teen and college visitors, "What form of media impacts your life the most, and why?" as part of its national monthly writing contest series for students.

Over 5,190 students from all 50 U.S. states and 69 countries visited the teen writing contest page. From the scores of submitted blogs to StageofLife.com, four trends/ themes emerged about teens' attitudes towards the media:

1. Internet: Nearly a quarter of the student writers said that Internet was the media that affected them the most, citing that it's the perfect place to research, and to keep in touch with friends and family.

One contest finalist, Jenny Zhang, of Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School from Middle Village, NY, wrote, in her essay entitled, [Media: Are we really using the internet, or is it vice versa](#), "Our fast-paced society demands technology to be always moving at its fastest speed and to the best of its ability with little to no errors. But has anyone considered the toll the internet has taken on our lives? Technology is frightening. The utmost terrifying development ever created by man. I won't deny that I am a victim of the internet because I find myself drawn to these technologies in ways I never thought I would be."

2. Television: While some students get their information from television, many wrote about the "mind numbing" effects of this medium. It received the most negative responses; students feel television is "distracting."

Essay finalist, Justina Tran of Garden Grove High School, Garden Grove, CA, wrote, "In essence, the news media presents us with what it thinks we should know, but it's ultimately our responsibility to use that knowledge to make a difference and thus spread hope to those who need it most. As a wise mentor advised me, two types of people dwell in this world: talkers and do-ers. The news media are fundamentally the talkers and it's up to us to be the do-ers," in her essay [Media: The Difference Between Newscasters and Whom They Inform](#).

3. Facebook: It's no surprise that a large percentage of teenagers cited Facebook as their most influential form of media in their lives, since it connects the students to friends, family, and gossip. Several students raised privacy concerns about using Facebook in their essays, as well as larger issues like cyber-bullying.

Finalist Riley Brewer, of Rhea County High School from Cookeville, TN, wrote, "The power of Facebook isn't easily defined...I am aware of the most intimate details of my high school classmates' lives; I know who is getting divorced at 22, who is preparing to graduate summa cum laude, who has moved to Vegas to pole dance, and who has traded in football practice for burger flipping. True, I could choose not to read friends' status updates, but I must admit the temptation is too much for a mere mortal to resist," in the essay [Media: The Facebook Juggernaut](#).

4. Overall, Media is Positive: Although there were some dissenters, the majority of student writers felt that media—in all forms and varieties—is an important, powerful, and positive influence on a person's life.

In the essay, [Media: Children of the Techno-Revolution](#), teen blogger Katie Garner, of Vista High school from Oceanside, CA, wrote, "Nearly every aspect of my life, in some way or another, is consumed by the functions of modern technology. But I revel in it, for I am a child of the techno-revolution, an age that has spawned millions of other faithful offspring and captivated our thoughts and imagination. Friends may speak to each other from California to Tokyo without delay. Blogs may swap philosophical concepts or short stories, and people around the planet can share their experiences in a chat room. So, how could only one form of media possibly affect me when so many intertwine to shape the way I live? These innovations are all strands of the same web. They constantly surround us, my fellow children and I, so that we remain entangled together. Some might find this instant gratification distasteful; but quite frankly, I think it is wonderful."

Aside from the themes listed above, the student writing contest took in a wide variety of entries addressing various forms of media / communication that included blogs about social networking, cell phones, the internet, television, blogs, books/print, Facebook, celebrities, music, gossip, YouTube, texting, computers, video games, photo editing, prayer, verbal communication, the news, Skype, and the media in general.

StageofLife.com CEO, Eric Thiegis, stated, "If you get a chance to read these essays, you'll find they are truly amazing when you



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look at how the students break down and analyze the media. Our winner, Keilah Sullivan, a home schooled student from St. Louis, MO used a tongue and cheek approach to champion her love for print media in her essay, [Media: I Like it Black, White, and Read All Over.](#)"

Interested readers can read the summary report and find links to over 140 featured essays about Teens and the Media at <http://www.stageoflife.com/TeensandMedia.aspx>.

Teens & Media Writing Contest Finalists

- Kaleigh Somers, James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA., from Royersford, PA
- Yipeng Xie, Carlisle School, from Martinsville, VA
- Riley Brewer, Rhea County High School, from Cookeville, TN
- Jenny Zhang, Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School, from Middle Village, NY
- Justina Tran, Garden Grove High School, from Garden Grove, CA
- D.J. Schaefer, Waukesha South High School, from Waukesha, Wisconsin
- Keilah Sullivan, Home schooled, from St. Louis, MO
- Kimmy Tejasindhu, Cajon High School, from San Bernardino, CA
- Felicia Czochanski, Metuchen High School, from Metuchen, NJ
- Jennifer Pasatieri, Wellington C. Mepham High School, from North Merrick, NY
- Andrew Rauh, Divine Child High School, from Dearborn, MI
- Kammy Liu, John T. Hoggard High School, from Wilmington, NC
- Katie Garner, Vista High School, from Oceanside, CA
- Angela N., John F. Kennedy High School and California State University Northridge, from of Los Angeles, CA

May 2011 Writing Contest for High School Students

This month's [writing contest for high school students](#) on StageofLife.com asks high school students the question, "What was the most difficult thing you overcame this school year?" From friends to family to graduation to grades to self-esteem, teens go through a lot in the course of nine months. With graduation just around the corner (and already have happened for many college students), this contest writing prompt has already begun to elicit some unique responses. Entries will be accepted up till May 30th at Midnight PDT and the essay winner will receive a gift card/cash prize from sponsors like KodakGallery.com, StageofLife.com SWAG, and featured writing status on the site.

About Stage of Life®: [StageofLife.com](#) is a free, non-partisan, grassroots online community that hosts blogs, information, and resources for teens, Millennials/Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby Boomer generations. Its specialized content allows users to share and archive their life stories. StageofLife.com includes [free lesson plans](#) and writing prompts for Language Arts teachers, monthly writing contests for high school students and college students, blogging resources, a platform that [helps people promote their blogs, teen trends](#), custom news feeds for each stage of life, and [My Life Rewards](#), an area dedicated to providing relevant coupons and discounts exclusively geared towards each stage of life.

If you'd like more information about StageofLife.com or an interview with CEO/Founder Eric Thiegis, please call (717) 244-0006, or use the [Contact Us](#) form on the website. You may also contact PR/Marketing Coordinator Megan Colyer at (717) 654-9554 or megan.colyer@stageoflife.com.

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