

Women Online Have New Tech Attitude, According To Survey

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Survey Reveals New Woman Emerging - "Tif" the Technology Involved Female

It's sometimes fashionable, always functional, and a growing number of women consider it an absolute must-have. It's not the latest designer outfit or high-end household appliance - it's technology. And, according to Intel Corporation's "Women, Technology and Lifestyle" online survey of American adults, released today, women are catching up with men in the way they embrace technology.

Intel commissioned Harris Interactive, best known for the Harris Poll, to look at differences between male and female attitudes toward technology. The survey reveals that women are using computing technology in their daily lives now more than ever.

"Intel recognizes that women are a driving force in technology adoption, and it is important for us to understand how women use technology so we can meet their needs, too," said Dr. Genevieve Bell, a cultural anthropologist with Intel, who observes how people around the world use technology in daily life. "Throughout the world, women are embracing technology as part of their family and work lives, as well as for social, spiritual and romantic occasions."

Introducing "Tif" - the Technology Involved Female

A new, tech-savvy woman has emerged and Intel calls her "Tif," short for Technology Involved Female. She spans generations and backgrounds, from the young women who have grown up with technology, to women who have been exposed to technology at work, to motivated self-learners. Tif is closing the technology gender gap, with women at the youngest end of the spectrum actually surpassing men in their intent to purchase a laptop. Half of young women say their next computer will be a laptop as compared to 43 percent of men their same age.

Closing the Technology Gender Gap

Technology has become increasingly important in the daily lives of women. The Intel/Harris Interactive survey reveals women (58 percent) feel as lost as their male counterparts (56 percent) if they don't check email at least once per day. And, women continue to want more and more from their technology, with the majority of women (62 percent), like men (66 percent), enthusiastic about learning how to use new features on their computers.

Not often recognized as early adopters, women in the survey are revealed as leading the way with wireless Internet access, as more women than men believe this is one of the most important features for a laptop to have (39 percent women versus 29 percent men). While men (51 percent) and women (48 percent) agree that the airport tops the list of the most useful locations to have wireless Internet access, women (38 percent) are more likely than men (30 percent) to desire a connection in a doctor's office as well.

"While women have embraced technology as a useful tool in their daily lives to multi-task, stay organized and keep in touch, they are less tolerant of poor experiences - women are busy and want technology to work well right from the start," Bell said.

Since Intel's survey, "Laptops & Lifestyles," was conducted in 2002, women have become more reliant on their laptops. Eighty-seven percent now think checking a laptop at a coat check or with their luggage is too risky, as compared with 59 percent in 2002. Just two years ago 54 percent of women said they would panic if they left their laptop unattended in a public place; in 2004 that number is 87 percent.

The survey concludes that women still lag behind men in some areas including confidence in their decision to purchase computers.

"According to the survey, men are more likely than women to be confident in their technology purchases," said David Krane, senior vice president of Public Policy and Public Relations Research at Harris Interactive. "It makes sense for companies, such as Intel, to focus on women as a key audience and to create programs that educate them about technology."

While women may not feel as confident, they are nearly three times as likely as men to believe that the opposite sex overstates their knowledge about computers (32 percent women versus 10 percent men).

Technology as Essential as the Little Black Dress

As women are catching up with men, technology companies are catching up with women. "Women want the same things as men - and more - when it comes to technology," said Bell. "As women, we want our computers to be like that favorite 'little black dress' - reliable and functional, there when you need it, and readily accessorized to be as individual as you are."

According to Bell, increasingly companies around the globe are manufacturing products in response to Tifs' influence. Software has been developed to keep children off certain Web sites. Companies are integrating wireless Internet access capability into computing products,

allowing women the freedom to have technology everywhere. There are even changes to the design of technology to give it a more fashionable appeal. From pink laptops to fashionable cell phones with built-in mirrors and clothing-size converters - European- and Asian-born trends are beginning to emerge in the United States.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the United States between July 29 and Aug. 9, 2004 among a nationwide cross section of 2,545 adults (aged 18 and over), of whom 1,273 were men and 1,272 were women. Figures for age, sex, race, education, region, household income and Internet usage were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the online population.

In theory, with probability samples of this size, one could say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a sampling error of plus or minus 2 percentage points for the overall sample and plus or minus 3 percentage points for the men and women samples. Sampling error for the women aged 18-27 sample (259) is plus or minus 6 percentage points and for the men aged 18-27 sample (188) is plus or minus 7 percentage points. This online sample was not a probability sample.

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