

U.S. young people: geographic illiterates

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A recent geographic literacy survey suggests young U.S. adults fail to understand the world and their place in it, National Geographic News reports.

For example, despite nearly constant news coverage since the Iraqi war began in 2003, 63 percent of Americans aged 18 to 24 asked cannot correctly locate that country on a map of the Middle East, NGN said. Seventy percent could not find Iran or Israel, while 9-in-10 couldn't find Afghanistan on a map of Asia. And 54 percent were unaware that Sudan is an African nation.

In addition, National Geographic News says despite intense coverage of the December 2004 Indonesia earthquake and resulting tsunami, three-quarters of those surveyed could not find Indonesia on a map and were unaware Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation.

"Young Americans just don't seem to have much interest in the world outside of the United States," said David Rutherford, a specialist in geography education at the National Geographic Society in Washington.

New York City-based Roper Public Affairs conducted the survey for the National Geographic Society from last Dec, 17-Jan. 20.

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