

Meet the Millennials - and Market by Generation

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The [Pew Research Center](#) has profiled America's newest generation, the 50 million Millennials who are American teens and twenty-somethings making the passage into adulthood. As a group they are confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat and open to change. They are more ethnically and racially diverse than older adults. They're less religious, less likely to have served in the military, and are on track to become the most educated generation in American history.

The New Face of America (% of category)		
Ethnicity	Millennials (ages 18-29)	Adults (ages ≥ 30)
White	61%	70%
Black	14	11
Hispanic	19	13
Asian	5	5
Other	2	1

Source: PewResearchCenter, December 2009 current population survey, February 2009

Millennials are history's first "always connected" generation. Steeped in digital technology and social media, they treat their multi-tasking hand-held gadgets almost like a body part. More than eight-in-ten say they sleep with a cell phone by the bed, and nearly two-thirds admit to texting while driving.

Three-quarters have created a profile on a social networking site. In addition:

- One-in-five have posted a video of themselves online
- Nearly four-in-ten have a tattoo (about half of those with tattoos have two to five and 18% have six or more)
- Nearly one-in-four have a piercing in some place other than an earlobe, about six times the share of older adults who've done this
- Most Millennials have placed privacy boundaries on their social media profiles 70% say their tattoos are hidden beneath clothing

At the moment, 37% of 18- to 29-year-olds are unemployed or out of the workforce, the highest share among this age group in more than three decades.

Only about six-in-ten were raised by both parents, a smaller share than was the case with older generations. In weighing their own life priorities, Millennials (like older adults) place parenthood and marriage far above career and financial success.

- 21% Millennials are married now
- Half the share of their parents' generation at the same stage of life.
- 34% are parents. The study estimates that in 2006, more than a third of 18-to-29 year old women who gave birth were unmarried, a far higher share than was the case in earlier generations.

Millennials cast a wary eye on human nature. Two-thirds say "you can't be too careful" when dealing with people. Yet they are less skeptical than their elders of government. More so than other generations, they believe government should do more to solve problems.

They are the least overtly religious American generation in modern times. One-in-four are unaffiliated with any religion, far more than the share of older adults when they were ages 18 to 29. Yet Millennials pray about as often as their elders did in their own youth.

Millennials are on course to become the most educated generation in American history, accelerated in recent years by the millions of 20-somethings enrolling in graduate schools, colleges or community colleges in part because they can't find a job. Among 18-to-24 year olds 39.6% were enrolled in college as of 2008, according to census data.

About one-in-six older Millennials (ages 22 and older) say they've "boomeranged" back to a parent's home because of the recession. Millennials report having had fewer spats with mom or dad than older adults say they had with their own parents when they were growing up.

Politically, Millennials self-identify as liberals and were among Barack Obama's strongest supporters in 2008, backing him for president by more than a two-to-one ratio (66% to 32%). But about half of Millennials say the president has failed to change the way Washington works. Of those who say this, three-in-ten blame Obama himself, while more than half blame his political opponents and special interests.

Generational names are the handiwork of popular culture, says the report. Some are drawn from a historic event; others from rapid social or demographic change; others from a big turn in the calendar:

- **The Millennial generation** falls into the third category. The label refers those born after 1980, the first generation to come of age in the new millennium.
- **Generation X** covers people born from 1965 through 1980. The label long ago overtook the first name affixed to this generation: the Baby Bust. Xers are often depicted as savvy, entrepreneurial loners.
- **The Baby Boomer** label is drawn from the great spike in fertility that began in 1946, right after the end of World War II, and ended almost as abruptly in 1964, around the time the birth control pill went on the market. It's a classic example of a demography-driven name.

- **The Silent generation** describes adults born from 1928 through 1945. Children of the Great Depression and World War II, their "Silent" label refers to their conformist and civic instincts. It also makes for a nice contrast with the noisy ways of the anti-establishment Boomers.
- **The Greatest Generation** (those born before 1928) "saved the world" when it was young, in the memorable phrase of Ronald Reagan. It's the generation that fought and won World War II.

For more on this topic, call:

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