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Three percent of US teens believe that TVs will become obsolete in 5 years
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[US Teens Show a Positive Take on Sciences and Technology](#)

New study analyzes the trends in America's youth

The Lemelson-MIT Invention Index for 2009 showed without a doubt that America's youth is prepared and willing to embrace careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), with a very large percentage of them showing an active interest in learning "how things work." Although they wish to develop their knowledge in the direction of STEM, youngsters complain about the fact that they lack serious role models, of the magnitude that Albert Einstein was for his generation.

"As an educator, it's exciting to see that teens have such positive perceptions about science, technology, engineering and mathematics; traditionally, many students find these subjects intimidating. Increased exposure to STEM through hands-on learning and interaction with teachers and professionals in these fields may be partly responsible for this positive shift in teens' perceptions. It may also continue to help shake off any existing stereotypes, making STEM careers seem more accessible," explains Leigh Estabrooks, Lemelson-MIT Program invention education officer.

For this survey, a representative sample of 501 teenagers, between the ages of 12 and 17, were asked to express their views on a number of issues, including their perception on STEM, their future careers, their take on scientists, as well as on invention and innovation. Some 55 percent of them said that the best word to describe scientists, inventors and mathematicians was "intelligent," while only 25 percent of them chose "successful."

"If teens feel discouraged from pursuing a career in STEM, society may be deprived of emerging problem solvers and thought leaders to address pressing issues. The Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam initiative is one way schools can serve as vehicles to introduce mentors and role models into the process," says Estabrooks.

"The InvenTeam initiative is just one example of how young people can experience the impact of invention in everyday life. Our hope is that exposing students to mentors in STEM fields will empower and motivate them to seek inventive careers and support their optimism at the high school level. As a society, we must continue to cultivate future generations of STEM thinkers and inventors. This is a fundamental investment in the future strength of the U.S. economy," adds Lemelson-MIT Program executive director, Joshua Schuler.

The 2009 survey also showed that many teens rated some of the things we take for granted today as soon-to-be-obsolete. For example, 37 percent of them said that gas-powered cars would be obsolete in 5 years, whereas 32% of them pointed to landline phones. More than 3 percent believed that television would be the most important thing to become obsolete within this time frame.