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Regifting Commonplace in the Garden State

More than a third of New Jerseyans admit to “regifting” – taking a gift they received and giving it to someone else. According to a statewide poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, 38% say they regift. But among those who admit to engaging in the practice, the majority (72%) say they do so just “once in a while.” One in five admits to doing it “sometimes.” Just a handful (8%) of the regifters say they do it regularly.

“The popularity of regifting is driven by many things for different people,” said Burçak Ertimur, a professor of marketing at FDU's Silberman College of Business. “For some, it's thrift in difficult economic times, or it's a way to get around annoyingly high expectations about gift-giving. It's also awareness of, or guilt over, how much stuff goes into the landfill. But the main reason might be just the sheer volume of stuff we have,” she said.

The majority of regifters (60%) say they do it primarily because the gift is better suited for someone else. In line with this finding, relatives (23%) and friends (33%) are the most common targets for regifts, followed by co-workers (13%) and then someone in the community like a child's teacher, the mail carrier or the mechanic (19%).

Another motivation to regift is the desire to get rid of an unwanted gift (22%). The desire to save time (5%), money (7%) or storage space (5%) are at the bottom of the list. Household income is not correlated to regifting. “We were surprised that economic concerns do not play a bigger role in regifting,” said Ertimur.

But Professor Ertimur also said, “You don't necessarily have to worry about getting a regift this holiday season.” Only 10% of New Jerseyans say they plan to regift this holiday season and, of those who are planning to regift, about half expect to regift items for the holidays, while half say they'll regift *after* the holidays.

“Regifting after the holidays just makes sense,” said Ertimur, “because you may receive gifts that might better fit with someone else's tastes and that you don't really need.”

What about getting caught? An overwhelming majority of regifters (88%) express confidence that they have not been caught regifting.

On the other hand, 53% of New Jerseyans say they think that they have received a gift that was a regift. Just 29% think they've never been the target of a regift. Another 18% aren't sure.

And what of it? Nearly two out of five (38%) Garden Staters say they dislike the practice of regifting. And researchers note that a plurality of liberals (46%) like regifting, while a similar plurality of conservatives (46%) dislike regifting. Men by a margin of 41%-27% dislike the practice, but women split 36%-37%.

Among the survey's other findings: younger folks (18-29 years old) are more likely to regift than any other age group. Forty-seven percent of 18-29-year-olds say they regift, compared with 38% in the 30-44 age bracket and 37% in the 45-59 age bracket.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 601 adults statewide was conducted by telephone from November 15, 2010, through November 21, 2010, and including those who regift and those who do not, has a margin of error of +/-4 percentage points. Regifters numbered 227, and for that subgroup the margin of error is +/- 6.5 points.

Methodology, questions, and tables always on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Nov. 15, 2010, through Nov 21, 2010, using a randomly selected sample of 601 adults statewide (aged 18 and over). The margin of error for a sample of 601 randomly selected respondents, both regifters and not regifters, is +/- 4 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups, such as regifters, is larger and varies by the size of the subgroup. In this case, regifters number 227 and the margin of error for that subgroup is +/- 6.5 percentage points. But we hasten to add that survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. The sample is mathematically weighted to approximate known demographics of age, race and gender. The principal investigators in the project are Dr. James Hutton, Dr. Caroline Munoz, Dr. Burçak Etimur, and Dr. Peter Woolley.

Introduction: "...let me ask you about regifting presents—you know, when you get a present and later you give it to someone else..."

Question: How often do you regift...?										
N=601	All	Employment				Education				
		Full	Part	Ret.	Not	Some HS	HS	Some Coll.	College	Grad
Never	60%	62	50	61	61	72	61	68	56	57
Once in a while	27%	27	41	23	25	6	22	19	37	29
Sometimes	8%	9	5	9	7	17	6	9	6	9
Regularly	3%	2	5	2	6	0	7	3	1	2
unsure (vol)	2%	1	0	5	2	6	4	1	1	4

Question: How often do you regift? [Continued]				
N=601	Age			
	18-29	30-44	45-59	60 +
Never	53	61	64	60
Once in a while	26	32	25	24
Sometimes	8	6	9	9
Regularly	13	0	3	2
Unsure	0	1	0	5

Just regifters:	N=227
Once in a while	72%
Sometimes	21%
Regularly	8%

Question: When you regift, what's the main reason you do it? (Asked only of people who indicated they regift.)							
n=227	All	Gender		Yearly Household Income			
		men	wom	< \$50K	\$50-\$100k	\$100-\$150K	\$150-\$200k
No room to keep it	5%	5	4	4	3	5	25
To save money	7%	8	7	11	9	3	19
To save time	5%	7	3	0	5	3	0
Just don't want it	22%	26	19	30	25	14	19
better for someone else	60%	52	66	53	57	76	38
Unsure	1%	1	1	2	1	0	0

Question: In your case, who are you most likely to regift to when you do it? (Asked only of people who indicated they regift.)

n=227		All		Gender		Age			
				men	wom	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
A relative	23%			21	24	27	13	18	34
A friend	33%			29	36	38	43	26	31
Someone at work	13%			7	17	21	18	11	9
Someone else*	19%			26	13	15	13	27	17
Unsure	13%			18	10	0	12	18	10

* ...in your neighborhood, like mail carrier, mechanic, teacher...

Question: Has anyone ever caught you regifting? (Asked only of people who indicated they regift.)

n=227		All		Yearly Household Income				
				< \$50K	\$50- \$100k	\$100-\$150K	\$150- \$200k	\$200K+
Yes	8%			11	1	13	13	6
No	88%			83	96	84	87	94
Unsure	4%			7	3	3	0	0

Question: Do you think that you have received a gift that was a regift?

N=601	All	Political Ideology			Education				
		Lib.	Mod.	Con.	Some HS	HS	Some Coll.	College	Grad
Yes	53%	58	54	49	29	51	48	63	49
No	29%	24	30	32	41	33	33	22	31
Unsure	18%	19	16	19	29	16	20	15	20

Question: In general, do you like or dislike the practice of regifting?

N=601		All		Political Ideology			Gender		Employment			
				Lib.	Mod.	Con.	men	Women	Full	Part	Retired	Not
Like	32%			46	33	21	27	37	30	32	24	48
Dislike	38%			22	40	46	41	36	38	38	41	36
Neither	16%			15	18	18	20	13	18	18	18	11
Mixed	6%			8	5	8	7	6	8	8	6	1
Unsure	7%			10	5	8	6	8	7	5	11	4

Question: In general, do you like or dislike the practice of regifting? [Continued]

N=601		All		Ethnicity			
				White	African-American	Asian-American	Hispanic/Latino
Like	32%			27	37	41	52
Dislike	38%			41	45	22	28
Neither	16%			19	4	26	10
Mixed	6%			7	6	0	5
Unsure	7%			7	10	11	5

Question: This holiday season do you plan to do some regifting? [IF "yes" ASK "Would that be for the holiday or after the holiday?"]

N=601		All		Education					Gender	
				Some HS	HS	Some Coll.	College	Grad	Men	Women
Yes, for the holiday	6%			0	3	4	8	9	6	5
Yes, after the holiday	4%			0	2	1	9	4	1	7
No	83%			77	86	91	80	77	83	84
Not sure	7%			23	9	4	4	10	11	4

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Question Wording and Order

US1-US2 [Released 11.29.10]

NJ1-NJ7 [Released 11.23.10]

RG1. Changing the topic for a moment, let me ask you about regifting presents—you know, when you get a present and later you give it to someone else...

How often do you regift...READ?

- Never [Skip to RG5]
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Regularly
- Don't know (vol) [Skip to RG5]

RQ2. When you regift, what's the main reason you do it...READ?

ROTATE

- No room to keep it
- To Save money
- To Save time
- You just don't want it
- It's just better for someone else
- Don't know (vol)

RG3. In your case, who are you **most** likely regift to when you do it...READ?

ROTATE

- A Relative
- A Friend
- Someone at work
- Someone else in your neighborhood, like the mail carrier, your kid's teacher, your mechanic...
- Don't know (vol)

RG4. Has anyone ever caught you regifting?

Do not read

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

[If "never" or "don't know" to RG1, continue here.]

RG5. Do you think that you have received a gift that was a regift?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

RG6. In general, do you like or dislike the practice of regifting?

Like
Dislike
Don't know (vol)
neither
Mixed (vol)
Ref. (vol)

RG7. This holiday season do you plan to do some regifting: [if yes, ask would that be for the holiday or after the holiday?]

DO NOT READ

Yes for the holiday itself
Yes but after
No
Don't know/wait and see.
Ref.