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**ZOOMERANG SURVEY FINDS THAT AMERICAN FAMILIES ARE CUTTING BACK ON
BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING**

Weak Economy and High Gas Prices Forcing Parents and Students to Reduce Spending, Find Creative Ways to Save and Deal with Emotional Impact of Tighter Wallets

SAN FRANCISCO—August 27, 2008—[Zoomerang](#), the leader in online surveys, released the results of its August 2008 consumer study aimed at uncovering how the weakening economy is affecting both parents and students preparing for back-to-school. The online survey of more than 200 respondents in the U.S. found that the answer is clear: the majority of parents, college students and graduate students surveyed are cutting back this year. In fact, about 60 percent of parents and 62 percent of students report that they are cutting back on shopping for the upcoming school year, a fact that is impacting not only shopping behavior, but also how students and parents are feeling about back-to-school.

The reduction in back-to-school spending is closely tied to the overall rising cost of living in the U.S. and, specifically, high gas prices. When asked how the current state of the U.S. economy has impacted their lives, 25 percent of all those surveyed said it has impacted their lives a lot, while only 4 percent said not at all. Further, more than 20 percent of all those surveyed noted that they are spending less on back-to-school items specifically because of gas prices—in fact, among parents who say they are cutting back this year, a staggering 92 percent say rising gas prices are affecting their back-to-school plans.

The impact of these cutbacks is detrimental for both students and the economy. Zoomerang's research found that 23 percent of students are feeling unprepared and 43 percent of students are feeling angry or embarrassed. When asked to describe the effect of cutting back, one student said, "I feel like I am not prepared, as if I have to decide what not to buy for fear of not having enough." Among parents, 38 percent actually reported feeling like smart shoppers due to their behavioral changes, but many are not so upbeat—79 percent of those cutting back this year are buying fewer clothes for their children and as one parent noted, "My kids are upset that they are not getting ANY new school clothes this year."

In response to tough economic times, 38 percent of people surveyed say they are driving less for back-to-school this year. Among those who indicated that they are cutting back, the numbers are even higher—65 percent of parents and 59 percent of students in this group are driving less due to high gas prices. Interestingly, even those students who say they are not cutting back are still feeling the effects of tighter wallets—48 percent of these students say the current state of the economy has somewhat impacted their lives and 62 percent say they are reducing the amount of gas they use.

The Zoomerang survey also explored how Americans are coping and found that parents and students alike are finding creative ways to save money. Among all those surveyed, 39 percent are shopping at discount stores this year—less than 10 percent of those surveyed will be shopping in high-end and designer stores. Even those who are not planning to cut back are still curbing their spending—68 percent of parents who are not cutting back are still planning to shop at discount stores.

Additional back-to-school coping strategies include:

- 18 percent of students are purchasing wholesale school items;
- 55 percent of students are buying store brand (vs. name brand) supplies;
- 10 percent of parents are shopping online;
- 24 percent of parents are buying used items ;
- 67 percent of students who indicate that they are cutting back this year are looking for sales more often;
- 56 of these same students are also simply buying fewer clothes;
- Students also said that they working from home instead of driving, reusing notebooks and even changing the types of food they buy in order to curb spending;
- Parents are stopping landline phones and only using their cell phones, buying bikes for their kids (instead of driving), making lunches, staying at home for vacations and asking friends for hand-me-down clothes.

Finally, Zoomerang found that new computers in particular may be passed up on back-to-school shopping trips this year—68 percent of parents surveyed say the number of computers their family currently has is adequate and 81 percent of those students who are planning to spend the same or more on back-to-school this year indicate that they still are not planning to purchase a new computer.

About the Zoomerang Survey

Data was collected using [Zoomerang's online survey software](#) and is based on feedback from 212 U.S. respondents drawn from ZoomPanel, MarketTools' proprietary online sample source of more than 2.5 million individuals who have been validated through MarketTools TrueSample™. Survey respondents were 33 percent students and 67 percent parents and represented 35 of the 50 states. The overall margin of error was 5.65 percent with a 90 percent confidence level.

About Zoomerang

Zoomerang, part of MarketTools, Inc., pioneered Web-based surveys in 1999 to give organizations a powerful, self-service alternative to conduct accurate comprehensive surveys with a minimum of cost and effort. Today, Zoomerang is the world's #1 source for online surveys, helping thousands of organizations, including over 70 of the Fortune 100, in over 100 countries. Zoomerang provides a powerful alternative for organizations that need to conduct fast, accurate, comprehensive surveys with minimal cost and effort. Zoomerang's business, educational and nonprofit customers have created and sent more than 100 million surveys. Zoomerang supplements its surveys with expert professional services, including survey programming, translation, deployment and analysis, along with recruitment and selection of custom groups of survey respondents.

To learn more about how you can use Zoomerang to collect great insights for your organization, please visit us at Zoomerang.com and [sign up for Zoomerang](#) today.

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